



Title: Authorization to Enter into Contracts for Vegetation Maintenance.

Resolution number: 25-021

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Reviewed by: Name/Title: Chuck Holtman, Smith Partners

Recommended action: Selection of vendors and authorization for District Administrator to execute four contracts for Vegetation Management services.

Schedule: Date: March 27, 2025 – Vendor Selection and authorization to enter into contracts

Budget considerations: Fund name and code: Project Maintenance & Land Management, 2-2003-4320
Fund budget: \$215,200
Expenditures to date: \$5,100.00
Requested amount of funding: \$203,695.00 for 2025
\$254,057.00 for 2026

Past Board action:

Res # 19-034	Authorization to Enter into Four Contracts for Vegetation Maintenance at 25 sites
Res # 21-026	Authorization to Execute a Contract for Six Mile Marsh Prairie and Laketown Wetland Vegetation Maintenance
Res # 22-019	Authorization to Extend Five Vegetation Maintenance Contracts through 2022
Res #23-019	Authorization to Amend Five Vegetation Maintenance Contracts to Extend Work Through 2023
Res #24-022	Authorization to Amend Five Vegetation Maintenance Contracts to Extend Work Through 2024
Res #25-014	Authorization to Release Request for Quote Packages for Vegetation Management

Background:

In 2003, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) adopted a policy in which vegetation established as part of its land conservation and preservation, ecological restoration, and capital project implementation is actively maintained. This action was taken in response to discovering that project partners may not have the expertise, budget, or oversight needed for ongoing vegetation maintenance. MCWD is best equipped to ensure the maintenance undertaken is regular and consistent across its lands and projects. As more recent capital projects have reached the end of their warranty period, and maintenance and management goals have been refined for MCWD lands, the number of managed vegetation sites has increased to 29 sites.

In 2020, the Board authorized two-year vegetation management contracts, through 2021. Those contracts were then extended three times through the end of 2024. In preparation of the 2025 growing season staff prepared new requests for quotes (RFQs), adjusting for the addition of new sites, changes in geographic grouping, and consolidation of scopes

of service. On February 27, 2025, the Board authorized the release of RFQs, which were emailed to eight known vendors, posted to the District’s website, and posted to the League of Minnesota Cities website.

The District received responses from four vendors: Landbridge Ecological, Minnesota Native Landscapes (MNL), Native Resource Preservation (NRP), and Natural Shore Technologies (NST). Two of the firms, MNL and NRP, submitted quotes for all four sites. NST submitted for two sites, and Landbridge for just one. The firms provided quotes for the RFQs as follows:

- Minneapolis Ponds and Arden Park Sites: Four Quotes; Landbridge, MNL, NRP, and NST.
- Minnehaha Greenway and Headwaters Sites: Three Quotes; MNL, NRP, and NST.
- Northern Upper Watershed Sites: Two Quotes; MNL and NRP.
- Southern Upper Watershed Sites: Two Quotes; MNL and NRP.

Analysis:

Staff reviewed each set of quotes and supporting documents submitted, considering references, previous work for the District, and price. NRP and NST provided references that demonstrated that they are proficient and capable of performing the services. Landbridge, MNL, and NST all have prior experience providing vegetation maintenance services to the District, with MNL and NST both being high performers. With most firms having the ability to conduct the work at a high level, staff considered cost the most significant factor in making recommendations.

Low quotes were submitted by two firms across the four contracts. NST provided the low quote for Minneapolis Ponds and Arden Park sites, and Minnehaha Greenway and Headwaters sites. MNL provided the low quote for the Northern Upper Watershed sites and Southern Upper Watershed sites. Other quotes ranged between 121% and 260% of low quote cost. The submittal from each firm have been provided in supplemental materials, distributed separately to the managers in order to protect non-public information in accordance with Minnesota Statutes §13.591.

Site Group	Contractor	Total	% of low quote
MPLS	Landbridge	\$ 164,381.00	205%
	MNL	\$ 127,740.00	160%
	NRP	\$ 96,549.07	121%
	NST	\$ 79,999.00	-
Greenway	MNL	\$ 154,130.00	156%
	NRP	\$ 176,691.16	178%
	NST	\$ 99,013.00	-
North	MNL	\$ 138,650.00	-
	NRP	\$ 357,083.46	260%
South	MNL	\$ 140,090.00	-
	NRP	\$ 314,064.25	224%
Low Bid Total		\$ 457,752.00	

The total of low quotes received for the four groups of sites exceeds the Districts 2025 vegetation maintenance budget set at \$205,000. Staff assessed the services requested in 2025 and identified 12%-18% of reallocations from 2025 to 2026 on each of the four contracts. The services selected to be delayed are primarily single treatments where the efficacy of the treatment would not be greatly affected by a delay, or treatments at sites where the reduction would not have negative impacts. This includes prescribed burns, woody species management, targeted cool season treatments, and vegetation maintenance treatments. These services would be conducted at an appropriate time in 2026. If in 2026 reallocated services are deemed to not be needed to meet objectives, funds will be reallocated to other treatments, enhancements, or cancelled. Prospective contractors have been contacted about the reallocation and have confirmed that this would not affect their pricing or interest in providing services.

Recommendation:

In summary, staff finds all contractors to have similar ability to offer high quality vegetation management services to the District. NST and MNL offer the most cost-effective delivery of said services. Staff recommends the selection of the following vendors for vegetation management:

- Natural Shore Technologies, Inc. for Vegetation Maintenance Services at Minneapolis Ponds and Arden Park sites contract;
- Natural Shore Technologies, Inc. for Vegetation Maintenance Services at Minnehaha Greenway and Headwaters sites contract;
- Minnesota Native Landscapes, Inc. for Vegetation Maintenance Services at Northern Upper Watershed sites contract; and
- Minnesota Native Landscapes, Inc. for Vegetation Maintenance Services at Southern Upper Watershed sites contract.

At the March 27, 2025, Board meeting, staff will present contract award recommendations, review the proposed reallocation of services from 2025 to 2026, and answer questions regarding ongoing efforts at the various sites the MCWD manages. It is staff's recommendation that the Board of Managers approve resolution 25-021, authorizing the District Administrator, on advice of counsel, to enter into contracts for vegetation maintenance.

Supporting documents (list attachments):

- Attachment 1 - Vegetation Management Contract Map
- In accordance with Minnesota Statutes §13.591, submitted quotes are not a part of the public record until the Board of Managers has selected a vendor. A copy of each submitted quote will have been distributed to the managers, via email, for review prior to the March 27, 2025 meeting.



RESOLUTION

Resolution number: 25-021

Title: Authorization to Enter into Contracts for Vegetation Management

- WHEREAS the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) engages in land conservation and preservation, ecological restoration, and regional capital improvement projects as described in its Watershed Management Plan;
- WHEREAS the MCWD Board of Managers (“Board”) has a maintenance policy under which MCWD retains the responsibility for maintenance of vegetation planted in conjunction with its land conservation restoration and capital project implementation goals;
- WHEREAS in 2021 and 2022, the Board approved contracting for vegetation maintenance on 27 of its real property locations, and thereafter contracts were amended to extend services through 2024;
- WHEREAS in 2024 and early 2025, staff reviewed MCWD’s approach to vegetation maintenance and recommended a revised approach for 2025 and beyond;
- WHEREAS the Board authorized the release of request for quotes (RFQs) for vegetation maintenance services on February 13, 2025;
- WHEREAS the District solicited quotes and received responses from four vegetation maintenance contractors;
- WHEREAS District staff has reviewed the quotes and determined that contractors all are qualified and of similar ability to provide services and thus recommends contract award on the basis of lowest cost;
- WHEREAS the Board has reviewed the submitted quotes and concurs with the recommendation of staff;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the District Administrator, on advice of legal counsel, to execute Minneapolis Ponds and Arden Park sites contract for vegetation maintenance with Natural Shore Technologies, Inc., for a period of two years, and amount not to exceed \$80,000.00;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the District Administrator, on advice of legal counsel, to execute Minnehaha Greenway and Headwaters sites contract for vegetation maintenance with Natural Shore Technologies, Inc., for a period of two years, and amount not to exceed \$99,100.00;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the District Administrator, on advice of legal counsel, to execute Northern Upper Watershed sites contract for vegetation maintenance with Minnesota Native Landscapes, Inc., for a period of two years, and amount not to exceed \$138,700.00;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the District Administrator, on advice of legal counsel, to execute Southern Upper Watershed sites contract for vegetation maintenance with Minnesota Native Landscapes, Inc., for a period of two years, and amount not to exceed \$140,100.00.

Resolution Number 25-021 was moved by Manager _____, seconded by Manager _____. Motion to adopt the resolution ___ ayes, ___ nays, ___ abstentions. Date: 3/27/2025

_____ Date: _____
Secretary

MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

2025-2026 VEGETATION & POND MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS

- LEGEND**
- MPLS Ponds & Arden Park
 - Minnehaha Greenway & Headwaters
 - Northern Upper Watershed Sites
 - Southern Upper Watershed Sites

