



## Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

### MEMO

To: BCWMC Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners  
From: Laura Jester, Administrator  
Date: June 5, 2023

**Recommendation:** Provide \$6,000 to Metro Blooms to Support Sustainable Landcare Training Program

The BCWMC 2023 operating budget includes \$4,000 for Metro Blooms resident engagement in Minneapolis Neighborhoods (from the Water Education Partnerships budget line). The BCWMC has partnered with Metro Blooms on multiple grant-funded outreach and implementation projects in Minneapolis since 2016 totaling nearly \$295,000 in grant funding. Since 2016, the BCWMC has annually provided local matching dollars of \$4,000 for these projects. Metro Blooms does exceptional work in Minneapolis to build relationships and engage with diverse communities around water and sustainable environments.

In addition to the \$4,000 already allocated in the 2023 budget to support Metro Blooms programs, Metro Blooms is requesting an additional \$2,000 to fill a funding gap to implement their Sustainable Landcare Training Program. This training program is implemented with the ANYCAP cohort from All Nations congregation (one of the sites from a grant funded project in 2021). Following training Metro Blooms plans to employ a crew from this cohort to install and care for boulevard raingardens in Near North and continue working with the ANYCAP mentors to lead conversations around environmental and community care. Funding from the City of Minneapolis is already leveraged for this work. See the attached funding request for additional information.

The BCWMC has \$2,000 unallocated education funding available in its 2023 "Water Education Partnership" budget line. \$2,000 was slated for the River Watch Program coordinate by Hennepin County. However, the county is not currently supporting this program and will not be seeking partner funding.

I recommend the Commission approve the funding request from Metro Blooms for \$6,000 in 2023.



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June 1, 2023

Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission  
Request for Funding  
Request Amount: \$6,000

Metro Blooms has been partnering with the BCWMC closely over the past 6 years, striving to create accessible resources and community led projects to expand clean water practices and pollinator habitat across the watershed. Our partnership has been focused with communities that experience environmental injustices, particularly communities of color, low income communities, and renters in the near north neighborhoods of Minneapolis. It has led to hundreds of thousands of dollars of investment with these communities, resulting in strong, supportive relationships, over 50,000 square feet of pollinator habitat and stormwater management practices, 100+ young adults and local contractors trained, and the expansion of our programming to meet community needs for training, employment, and connection to each other and nature.

This year, we're focusing on the following activities within the Bassett Creek Watershed:

- Supporting residents impacted by ash tree removals in north Minneapolis. We co-hosted two listening sessions with Amoke Kubat for North Minneapolis residents who have been burdened financially and otherwise by the requirements to remove Ash Trees, are raising money to provide economic relief to these residents, and are doorknocking to connect folks with information and opportunities for re-planting.
- Co-hosted a winter seed sowing program in partnership with Heritage Park, 20 youth and residents attended. Our hope is to support these new growers and be able to purchase plants for north Minneapolis projects directly from them.
- Planning for continued paid Sustainable Landcare Training with the All Nations Youth and Community Assistance Program ( cohort of youth, young adults and elders).
- Partnering with Jordan Area Community Council (JACC) on events at the Jordan community garden to reduce barriers for folks to plan in their own space and Redeemer Center for Life on Glenwood to care for native plantings and raingardens.
- Working with the Eloise Butler Wildflower garden to install a huge (10,000 square foot!) new demonstration pollinator garden through partnership with Wilderness in the City
- Our online resilient yard workshop content is now free to all MN residents, with nearly 3,000 folks registering for the online learning platform and Lawns to Legumes continues to be very popular.
- Continuing the boulevard raingarden project in north, promoting long term investment in community amenities, pollinator habitat and clean water
- Continuing to work with JACC and the BEAM multi family housing property - this summer we'll be hiring residents to plant the new park space!

*Metro Blooms partners with communities to create resilient landscapes and foster clean watersheds, embracing the values of equity and inclusion to solve environmental challenges.*

Grow. Bloom. Inspire!

Our partnership with BCWMC supports all of these activities. One space we could use additional support is the Sustainable Landcare Training with the ANYCAP cohort from All Nations congregation (one of the business sites from our 2021 commercial clean water fund partnership). Following training we're hoping to employ a crew from this cohort to install and care for boulevard raingardens in near north and continue working with their mentors, Bendu and Lenda, to lead conversations around environmental and community care. Young folks will be paid to attend the training. Funding from the City of Minneapolis supports this work as well. Additional support from Bassett Creek would allow us to fully compensate Bendu and Lenda for their mentorship.

After training, there are several next-step opportunities. We are able to hire some youth as environmental and social justice advocates. Other youth are contracted to install and care for green infrastructure projects. Last year, 25 North Minneapolis residents attended the paid training and a group of 9 teens/young adults from this cohort became a paid crew for Metro Blooms to plant boulevard gardens in their community. This year, youth leaders will coordinate the crew work in partnership with Metro Blooms' environmental and social justice advocate team, and we are piloting Care Crews, providing youths members time and support to engage around self-care, affirmation of identity, community-care, and building relationships. Youth and adult mentors will have conversation in circle, complete social and emotional learning activities, and complete self-care planning, expanding the safe space of ANYCAP through supporting youth in navigating emotions, moving through conflict, mental health, leadership opportunities, and connecting to each other and our earth. Bendu and Lenda, community mentors, will co-facilitate this space with Metro Blooms. In addition, the Blue Thumb partnership, which we manage, has long-term relationships with 50+ state and local government agency partners, landscape and native plant nursery partners, and nonprofits, providing potential employers to young green job seekers. We're working with employment partners and job readiness organizations to create clear connections to immediate next-step jobs in the green economy.

The training is an integral part of our community-centered work together. It's what allows us to not only work with residents to bring their vision for their outdoor spaces to reality, but to hire them to do the work and benefit economically from clean water and habitat investments. So much is possible within the context of clean water projects, and we appreciate your continued partnership in supporting the needs of all of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration,



Laura Scholl, Metro Blooms, Executive Director