



September 4, 2014

Clean Water Council  
Budget and Outcomes Committee  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
520 Lafayette Road North  
St. Paul MN 55155

Mike McKay, Chair  
Clean Water Council  
406 Main Street  
Red Wing, MN 55066

Dear Members of the Clean Water Council Budget and Outcomes Committee:

We are writing to urge you to include funding of at least \$1 million a year for the Forever Green Initiative to the University of Minnesota as part of your final recommendations

As you are all aware the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency report “Nitrogen in Minnesota Surface Waters” found high amounts of nitrates in much of Minnesota’s waters with 73% of nitrates coming from cropland. The report concludes that the development of more cover crops and perennial crops is critical to cleaning up our water. The Forever Green Initiative was established to address just this issue. Its focus is on the research and outreach to develop and improve cover crops and perennial crops that are profitable for farmers to grow and necessary to improve water quality.

The Forever Green Initiative has a competitive, peer review process for allocating resources that is open to all research and outreach faculty. Attached is the process for allocating the one-time funding that the legislature allocated this year that demonstrates the effective and open process used.

The University of Minnesota has the staff with the skills and interest in this work and is uniquely positioned to advance it. The Forever Green Initiative provides a mechanism to direct this talent. What has been missing is a commitment of ongoing funding to enable work that needs to take place over several growing seasons. For the Clean Water Council to include this funding in their final recommendations would be an important step in achieving this. We feel that \$1 million a year is a modest sum in light of the dramatic potential for positive change in water quality this effort could yield over the long term.

We have been working with Chair McKay and council staff to arrange for a presentation to the Council on the activities and goals of the Initiative. We expect this to occur before the end of the year.

Lastly, we are particularly excited about this as the Forever Green Initiative is an effort where environmental organizations and farm organizations are in strong agreement. As farm organizations, the Minnesota Farmers Union and Land Stewardship Project were advocates of the program at the legislature along with the Minnesota Environmental Partnership.

Sincerely,



Steve Morse, Executive Director  
Minnesota Environmental Partnership

Duane Ninneman, Executive Director  
Clean Up the River Environment

Deanna White, State Director  
Clean Water Action Minnesota

Whitney Clark, Executive Director  
Friends of the Mississippi River

George Boody, Executive Director  
Land Stewardship Project

Scott Strand, Executive Director  
Minnesota Center for Environmental  
Advocacy

## Forever Green Agriculture Initiative Call for Proposals

The Forever Green Agriculture Initiative is accepting applications for proposals that focus on crops for addressing Minnesota agriculture's productivity, efficiency and adaptability to variable climates. Plant species of interest include: herbaceous and woody perennials and winter annual crops.

Estimated number of awards: 6-10

Anticipated funding amount: up to \$150,000 over ~3 years

Announcement:	7/29/14
Proposal Deadline:	9/15/14
Award Date:	10/1/14
End Date:	6/30/17
Progress report:	12/15/15
Progress report	12/15/16
Final report:	8/1/17

### Application Process:

Submit proposals by **9:00AM Monday, September 15, 2014.**

Email complete application to:

Laura Olevitch ([olevitch@umn.edu](mailto:olevitch@umn.edu))

Completed applications must include the following:

1. Cover page
2. Proposal narrative (3 page max.)
3. Literature cited (no page limit)
4. Charts/graphs/figures (optional; 1 page)
5. Quarterly timeline (template)
6. Budget narrative (1 page max.)
7. PI curriculum vitae (2 page max.)
8. Other funds (1 page max.)

**Format:** single-spaced, point size of 12 or higher, 1" margins

*All applicants will receive a confirmation of proposal receipt via email.*

For questions regarding this proposal and any submission instructions, email Laura Olevitch ([olevitch@umn.edu](mailto:olevitch@umn.edu)) or Mike Schmitt ([schmi009@umn.edu](mailto:schmi009@umn.edu)).

## **Cover Page**

To include the following:

- Proposal title
- Principal Investigator and home department, email address, and phone number
- Names of all Co-Investigators, and their respective home department(s) and role(s) on the project
- Total dollar amount of request

## **Proposal Narrative (*3 page max.*)**

### *- Rationale*

Provide background and need for the proposed work. Explain why the research you are proposing is important and timely.

### *- Goals and Objectives, and Relevance to Forever Green Initiative*

Present measurable objectives for research. Describe how these goals and objectives will advance the protection of natural resources while increasing efficiency, profitability and productivity of Minnesota farmers.

### *- Approach and Methodology*

Describe the approach, scientific methodology, experimental design, and data to be collected (or secondary data that will be analyzed). Explain how these methods are appropriate for the research project.

### *- Deliverables*

Describe the near-term results or products you expect from the proposed research. Results and/or products should be specific, clear, and measurable.

## **Budget Narrative (*1 page max.*)**

Outline the main proposed expenditures. Examples of budget categories include: personnel (e.g., faculty, student research assistants, staff), equipment, and supplies.

Budget items should generally track the proposed research plan goals and objectives.

*(A detailed budget is not required for proposals but will be required upon award.)*

## **Other Funds (*1 page max.*)**

If any PI or co-PI identified on the proposed project has *related* current or pending support, provide a summary of how this proposed research fits and complements current and pending research. Provide the following information on each related project:

- Project Title
- Funding Agency
- Total Funds
- Award Period
- Status (current, pending, planned for submission in the near future)

In cases where current or pending support would otherwise exceed one page, report on the projects most closely related to the proposal. Reviewers will be asked to consider the overall body of work and how this proposed research fits within the investigators larger area of interest research enterprise.

## Project Timeline

Project Activity / Outcome	Period I				Period 2				Period 3		
	10/1/14-9/30/15				10/1/15-9/30/16				10/1/16-6/30/17		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											

*List major activities and outcomes, and indicate time period(s) during which these will take place and/or be completed.*

## **Proposal Review Process and Notification**

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee comprised of CFANS faculty. Reviewers may recommend whole or partial funding of a project.

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Maximum Score</b>
<b>Goals and Objectives</b>	
Proposed project advances the goal of incorporating perennial or winter annual crops into existing agricultural practices.	25
Proposed project focuses on research that will advance the protection of natural resources while increasing efficiency, profitability and productivity of Minnesota farmers.	25
Objectives are measureable, specific, and clearly stated.	5
<b>Technical and Scientific Merit</b>	
The plan for carrying out the proposed activities is well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale. Proposed project explores creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts and can reasonably be accomplished with in the planned budget and timeline.	25
<b>Qualifications and Integration of the Research Team</b>	
Project team is sufficiently comprised of members who have the necessary skills and expertise to accomplish the proposed research.	10
<b>Project Need and Timeliness</b>	
Proposed research fits within the investigator's larger area-of-interest research enterprise and is necessary at this time in order to move forward.	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	100

## **Grant Requirements**

Upon award, principal investigators of funded projects will be required to provide:

- 1.) Abstract  
250-word summary of the project's goals and objectives; approach and methodology; and anticipated outcomes, written in non-technical terms.
- 2.) Detailed budget (template will be provided)
- 3.) Annual progress reports and a final report  
Reports to include:
  - Activities completed, including specific deliverables
  - Progress made toward the original goals of the project
  - Long-term sustainability and impact of the project
  - Additional funds secured or applied for to support continuation of the project
  - Details on how the funds were used, and any changes made in the use of the grant funds from your original proposal

Further guidance on reporting requirements will be provided upon award.

Failure to meet these requirements may lead to loss of funds. Projects must be completed within the allotted timeframe. No-cost extensions will not be allowed.