Living Laboratory Application - Grounds & Landscape

This application form is for Living Laboratory projects involving Grounds and Landscapes. Twice per year, the Twin Cities Sustainability Committee invites students, faculty, and staff to submit proposals to modify the campus grounds and landscapes for research or educational purposes.

This proposal solicitation process is intended to surface projects involved in the following:

- For which the faculty, staff, and/or student wants to take an active role in implementation of the project.
- Modify the current grounds or landscape in a way that would require University operations to incur additional expense.
- Modifies the landscape from its current use.
- Requires dedicated or controlled use of the space.

* Required Fields

First Name *

XXXXXXXX

Last Name *

XXXXXXXX

UMN E-mail Address (X.500) *

XXXXXXXX@umn.edu

Phone Number *

( XXX ) XXX - XXXX

Primary Affiliation * (Faculty, Student, Staff)

Faculty

College *

CFNAS
Proposal Summary *
Summarize the project including activities associated with its implementation and expected outcomes.

We propose to create a “Community Connections” garden on the west side of Skok Hall (St. Paul campus). The name community connections refers both to the connections between the plants in the garden and the insects and other organisms that use them, the university and broader community members that use the garden as place for relaxing, learning, and meeting. This native plants butterfly and pollinator garden will complement our existing garden on the south side of Green Hall. It will serve as a space for members of the university and surrounding community to learn about pollinators, butterflies, and pollinator gardens and enjoy nature. Like our existing garden, it will be used during summer courses for K-12 teachers (ongoing Summer Ecology Institutes taught by Oberhauser and FWCB faculty member Rob Blair) and regular UM courses.

Support of University Mission *
Describe how the project contributes to teaching, research, and/or outreach. If applicable, identify the project's specific Learning Outcomes (http://www.slo.umn.edu/index.html), or Development Outcomes (http://www.sdo.umn.edu/index.html).

This garden will be used for teaching and outreach. It will be an integral part of ongoing summer courses for K-12 teachers, and will serve the surrounding community as a learning garden. It will also become a Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (www.mlmp.org) site, thus supporting a University of Minnesota citizen science project.

Alignment with Sustainability Priorities *
Describe how the project advances University sustainability goals identified in the Regents policy "Sustainability and Energy Efficiency" and related University plans (e.g. System wide Goals and Outcomes Report).

The proposal complements many features of the Campus Master Plan: it will promote community connections, strengthen connections to the adjacent community, help to create a cohesive system of memorable spaces, optimize the use of campus land applying best practices, help to develop a campus that is environmentally sustainable, and use the campus as a living laboratory.

By providing a calming and beautiful resting point on campus (with benches and signage) the garden will provide a comfortable, safe, and accessible environment that encourages involvement with programs and services. It will support teaching and service learning connections between the campus and surrounding communities by providing opportunities for student involvement in interpretation and maintenance activities and a space for community members, who often walk through the St. Paul campus, to learn about native plant gardening. It will provide a flexible learning, living, working, and gathering space, and its proximity to the summer youth programming activities will make it accessible to those campus visitors as well. The garden will support continued enlivening of the St. Paul campus, which has a number of beautifully landscaped spaces, but few native plant spaces and few gardens set up specifically for learning. We will use best practices for supporting pollinators and native plants in a garden that will require little watering after establishment, thus making the campus more environmentally sustainable.
Location *
Provide information about proposed location for the project and why it was chosen. If you have not identified a location for the project please state this and indicate any campus preference.

We propose to create the garden on the west side of Skok Hall, abutting the enclosed walkway between Skok Hall and Green Hall. This space is accessible to both the U of M and surrounding communities, very visible, and will provide a beautiful complement to the plantings on the east side of the Skok/Green walkway.

Outreach to the University Community *
Describe anticipated impacts to University Departments or programs that are adjacent to the space, use the space for current programming, or will use the space once the project is implemented. Describe how these groups have been informed about the project.

As noted above, the garden will be a beautiful space for individuals using surrounding buildings - Green Hall, Skok Hall, and the St. Paul gym. The bench will make it a relaxing place to sit and talk with friends and colleagues, and the path will make it accessible. We have talked with Gary Johnson, a faculty member in Forest Resources who uses the surrounding lawn area for courses on tree identification. We particularly contacted him about an ironwood (Ostrya virginiana) that would be on the very edge of the garden. He said “Probably the best thing that could happen to it would be to have an understory of anything but turfgrass, mulch and additional watering!”

Academic Affiliation for Student Initiated Projects
If the proposed project is a student-initiated effort please identify an academic department and faculty member that is advising and sponsoring the project.

Kimberly Byrd from Fisheries/Wildlife/Conservation Biology

Proposed Project Implementation Start Date *
Indicate the date when planting or modification of the space is to begin.

Spring 2013

Proposed Project Implementation Completion Date *
Indicate the date when planting or modification of the space is to expect to be complete.

Summer 2014

Project Duration *
Length of time the space is to be used for the project as measured from the Proposed Project Implementation Start Date. Please respond in terms of days, months, or years, or write "indefinite" if the proposed project is for an ongoing modification of the grounds and landscape.

Indefinite
**Long-term Responsibility:**
If project duration exceeds 2 years, identify which department or unit will be responsible for ongoing maintenance of the space.

**UM MonarchLab (FWCB)**

**Proposal Activities** *
Check the items below that will be part of your project

- [ ] Excavation
- (X) Planting
- [ ] Construction of Buildings or Other Structures
- (X) Use of Power Tools or Equipment
- [ ] Removal of Existing Plants
- [ ] Creation or Modification of Storm water Management Features (e.g. rain gardens, swales)
- [ ] Test and Control Spaces

**Budget** *
Provide an estimate of the budget for this project. Identify funding available to the proposer to for the project and/or funding sources the proposer would apply for if the proposal were selected.

We hope that the UM Sustainability Committee will support site preparation, mulch and mulch installation, necessary watering during the first year, and sign installation. We do know that the soil in that area is very hard, and has a high pH (8.2), so the site would benefit from activities to decrease soil compaction.