

2014 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2017

PROJECT TITLE: Diversifying Involvement in the Natural Resources Community – Part A

PROJECT MANAGER: Gina Bonsignore

AFFILIATION: MN DNR

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FUNDING SOURCE: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

LEGAL CITATION: M.L. 2014, Chp. 226, Sec. 2, Subd. 09d-1

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$416,000

AMOUNT SPENT: \$

AMOUNT REMAINING: \$

Overall Project Outcomes and Results

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI), University of Minnesota and US Forest Service (USFS) collaborated on a project targeting the lack of diversity in Minnesota's natural resource professional workforce. To increase involvement in our state's natural resource community, we engaged under-represented urban youth and their families in natural resource programming tailored to their interests and needs.

CCMI developed an employment and education program for high school youth from under-represented communities in the Twin Cities. Over three years, 220 youth received career and academic counseling as well as natural resource experiences. Of that group, 34 youth – "the Bridges Crew" participated in an intensive summer program working alongside DNR and other agency staff. Weekly enrichment days and in-the-field experiences engaged youth in the science of natural resources restoration and management. Their final three weeks were spent working in the Superior National Forest, funded by USFS. Youth evaluations revealed that this capstone experience cemented the bonding experience among crew and with the natural world and showed that 87% of youth had more awareness of and interest in natural resource and natural resource careers than at the start of the program.

DNR hired and mentored five student workers who researched issues and solutions to increasing diversity in natural resource activities and careers. Their work led to the production of career brochures and activities that are widely used by the agency and others to attract a more diverse workforce. These interns planned, organized crew projects and enrichment days. With DNR staff, they collaborated with partners to organize four annual events, marketed to and attended by under-represented communities, introducing over 1800 people per year to outdoor recreation. At these events, the interns shared information about careers and nearby opportunities to continue their outdoor adventures. A summary that outlines the program and lessons learned is available on CCMI's website.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

CCMI has created a Bridges page on their website that outlines the programs, goals and components of the Bridges Project (<http://www.conservationcorps.org/bridges>). Based on the work of project interns, the DNR produced a career guide and handouts that are aimed at attracting a more diverse workforce. The DNR has shared the career guide with all supervisors in the agency and will be posting them on their website for downloading. These materials are being used by our outreach staff and others, at career fairs and school visits throughout the state. A set of materials have been provided to college and career offices in Minneapolis and St. Paul high schools.

The DNR continues to work with outside partners to continue our collaborations and accomplish new avenues to connect with new audiences. For instance, on Aug 12th we partnered with St. Paul Public Housing to have a nature bike ride, with residents enjoying the outdoors. CCMI, DNR and the US Forest Service will continue to collaborate on continuing components of the Bridges crew to the extent future funding will allow. Career engagement materials, activities and guidance documents will be shared with organizations we have worked with throughout this project.



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2014 Work Plan Final Report

Date of Report: August 31, 2017
Date of Next Status Update Report: Final Report
Date of Work Plan Approval: June 4, 2014
Project Completion Date: June 30, 2017
Does this submission include an amendment request? No

PROJECT TITLE: Diversifying Involvement in the Natural Resources Community – Part A

Project Manager: Gina Bonsignore
Organization: MN DNR
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Location: Ramsey, Hennepin, Dakota, Washington, Anoka, Carver, Scott Counties

Total ENRTF Project Budget:

ENRTF Appropriation:	\$416,000
Amount Spent:	\$412,713
Balance:	\$3,287

Legal Citation: M.L. 2014, Chp. 226, Sec. 2, Subd. 09d-1

Appropriation Language:

\$416,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources and \$84,000 is to the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota to increase participation of under-represented communities in the natural resource professions and in outdoor recreation by means of targeted urban outreach and stronger linkages between Department of Natural Resources programs and academic offerings. This initiative must be coordinated with other environmental education appropriations in this subdivision. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2017, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

I. PROJECT TITLE: Diversifying Involvement in the Natural Resources Community

II. PROJECT STATEMENT: Minnesota's natural resource professional workforce is much less diverse than its citizenry and many other professional fields. The benefits of a more diverse workforce include the ability of the organization to increase innovation and creativity, attract a higher qualified candidate pool and ensure services that meet the interests and needs of its citizens. To accelerate the diversification of the natural resources workforce, two barriers must be removed. First more under-represented urban youth and their families need to be familiar and comfortable with outdoor recreation, natural resources and natural resource professional career opportunities. Second, more under-represented youth need to be recruited to natural resource programs at the university level.

To develop an active and environmentally literate citizenry that reflects the diverse faces of Minnesota this project will engage the urban community in natural resources education and in the development of outdoor recreational skills. Additionally this project will provide more under-represented youth with the support necessary to bridge their outdoor experiences and interests with the steps necessary to enter into university natural resources programs, where upon graduation they will have the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to qualified for natural resource careers. Those youth will build the bridge for others to be able to see themselves as part of the next generation of natural resource professionals and become a reflection of the diverse faces of Minnesota.

To diversify involvement in Minnesota's natural resources community this project will:

- Determine the natural resources programming interests and needs of under-represented urban youth and their families and connect them with close-to-home natural resource recreation and protection to develop that will create an engaged and environmentally literate urban community.
- Conservation Corps of Minnesota will implement CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge), a youth and young adult professional recruitment and retention program, to introduce them to outdoor recreation and natural resource management jobs and career opportunities.
- University of Minnesota College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources will provide a new) Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) for under-represented urban youth entering college focused on natural resource programs and mentoring guidance to follow the natural resources education and career path. (Described in Work Plan B)
- MN Department of Natural Resources will provide mentorships and MN Department of Natural Resources internships or other introductory natural resource-based job experiences.

III. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of January 1, 2015:

To begin determining the natural resource programming interests and needs of under-represented youth and their families, the MN Department of Natural Resources has researched the topic and met with internal and external organizations with similar objectives. Based upon initial information gathering, conversations have begun about potential changes to existing natural resource programs and events as well as new collaborations.

The CLIMB Program has been designed by the project partners – MN Department of Natural Resources, University of Minnesota, and the Conservation Corps. The program is proceeding into implementation. School districts, recreation centers, and other youth organizations have been contacted and will be involved moving forward. In early 2015, the leaders for the CLIMB Program will be hired and trained. Youth recruitment and hiring will also occur in early 2015.

The first PSEO session for which youth might be eligible starts in September 2015. Staff from the Conservation Corps is working with youth alumni and connecting them to the University of Minnesota for support in

completing PSEO applications. The Conservation Corps will also work with youth who start in March 2015 and connect them to the University to support them in completing their PSEO applications before the April deadline.

The MN Department of Natural Resources has identified strategies for providing mentorships and introductory natural resource experiences and is in the final stages of hiring the student who help develop and implement these programs.

Project Status as of July 1, 2015:

We have identified several ways to effectively address the natural resource interests and needs of underrepresented youth and their families. Our overall strategy is to enhance the existing efforts of organizations that are already working with this target audience. We are exposing youth and their families to the possibilities of careers in conservation in engaging ways in a variety of settings.

The CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge) has begun this June, with crew members selected from two groups of 60 youth that participated in Conservation Corps programs during the school year. This larger group was afforded the enhancements of U of MN and DNR participation in the existing program.

The University of Minnesota has developed an understanding of the dynamics of Post-secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) and provided guidance and support for students interested in pursuing that option at the school of their choice.

The MN Department of Natural Resources has set up introductory natural resource-based job experiences for the CLIMB crew, as well as other urban youth groups, in particular Urban Roots. Planning is underway to match the youth with DNR staff in their area of interest.

Project Status as of January 1, 2016:

We have successfully implemented the first summer crew experience for the twelve youth selected to participate in an enhanced conservation corps experience with extensive interaction with DNR staff and U of MN faculty and graduate students. “Bridges” is now the name we are using for the summer crew, instead of CLIMB, an acronym that is less compelling and was not embraced by the youth and their leaders. A highlight of the summer was a bonus three week experience in the Superior National Forest, with extra funding provided by the US Forest Service. The fall “class” of 55 youth culminated their conservation activities with a day long career event at the University and a spring crew is being recruited. We are planning our next year’s spring activities and summer field activities, building on lessons learned.

The DNR has expanded outreach activities for youth and families, working closely with many partners to engage youth and their families. In collaboration with St Paul Parks and Recreation, we culminated the Explore Outdoor St Paul campaign with new event at Hidden Falls on Public Lands Day. A very diverse group of over 300 people experienced river canoeing, fishing, archery and many other outdoor recreation activities for the first time.

Project Status as of July 1, 2016:

During spring 2016, Youth Outdoors participants were involved in introductory hands-on natural resource training and projects. In total, 47 youth enrolled in the spring semester. In addition to hands-on training and projects, youth had the opportunity to engage in college and career readiness training through workshops, individual and small group meetings, and the College and Career Day in May. The College and Career Day consisted of resume workshops, a college fair, relevant breakout sessions, and campus and lab tours through the University’s College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences. Throughout the College and Career Day, youth had the opportunity to connect with natural resource professionals and learn about the variety of careers within the field.

The second summer of CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge) started in June. Twelve youth are enrolled and have already had the opportunity to learn from naturalists, DNR staff, University of MN faculty, staff, and graduate students. Examples of enrichment day activities have included fish sampling and measurement, aquatic plants sampling and identification, and tree aging. The crew will once again spend the last three weeks of the program in the Superior National Forest.

DNR student workers expanded connections to multiple cultural groups in St Paul and Minneapolis. These connections produced successful strategies to engage youth and their families in outdoor recreation activities. In May, Take Aim at Summer Fun attracted 450 people represented a diverse spectrum of participants— including Karen, Somali, Hmong and Latino. At Powderhorn Park, in June over 800 participants were exposed to natural resource career information and activities.

Project Status as of January 1, 2017:

We have successfully implemented the “Bridges” summer crew experience for a second summer. Twelve youth were selected to participate in an enhanced conservation corps experience with extensive interaction with DNR staff and U of MN faculty and graduate students. Through additional funding provided by the US Forest Service, this year’s participants spent three weeks in the Superior National Forest. The fall “class” of 56 youth culminated their conservation activities with a day long career event at the University. The day included a campus tour, information about Post Secondary Enrollment Opportunities, a tour of the University’s Monarch Lab and a demonstration of drone and GIS technology. Recruitment for spring will begin in early January. We are planning next year’s spring activities, building on lessons learned and focusing on college and career support for youth who have participated in the program.

DNR student workers recruited staff from the agency and other organizations to connect with the Bridges summer crew and other youth conservation crews. These connections included field training and career meet-ups at DNR Central Office and Regional Headquarters. They successfully engaged culturally diverse youth and families at intro to outdoor recreation events at our Central Office Campus, Stearns County Mississippi River Park and Hidden Falls Park in St. Paul.

Amendment Request (04/25/2017):

The DNR requests an amendment to shift funds between budget categories. We would like to reallocate money from activities that will have achieved their outcomes at less cost than originally estimated, to provide more youth stipends to continue the program beyond that planned in the original project proposal. There are two reallocations proposed:

1. Reallocate money within Activity 1:.- \$11,966 from program managers and crew leader salary to youth stipends to partially fund two weeks of a summer Bridges youth crew in 2017, from June 15 to June 30 2017, (not part of the original proposal). We have identified resources to continue this program after June 30, working with the same and additional partners.

Why: CCMI’s cost for managing the program and the crew leader salaries was less than estimated to provide all of the outcomes outlined in Activity 1 of the proposal. Eight crew leaders received specialized training in youth education, leadership and natural resource management since the start of this project. We met and exceeded our goal of engaging at least 120 youth over a two year period. These youth participated in basic conservation projects and training. They received coaching about Post-Secondary Enrollments Options and conservation careers. From this pool, we engaged 24 youth (12 per summer) in the summer Bridges experience, conducting more scientific-based natural resource management, research projects and more intense career mentoring. Throughout the project, the project partners (CCMI, DNR, UMN and USFS) have evaluated the project successes and challenges and have adapted the

program. With the proposed reallocation, we have enough resources to continue this component to project completion.

2. Reallocate money from Activity 2 to Activity 1:- \$8,000 from internship salaries to additional youth stipends to partially fund two weeks of a summer Bridges youth crew in 2017, from June 15 to June 30 2017.

Why: DNR has exceeded the goal of hiring at least two MN DNR internships. We have hired a total of five different students. Rather than full-time employment, the students worked as many hours and as long as their schedule allowed, not a full-time, year-long stretch as originally budgeted. Most moved on to full-time permanent positions or graduate school. These students gained professional experience that bolstered their knowledge, skills and real work experience necessary to be qualified for natural resource careers. With the proposed reallocation, we will have budgeted to have one remaining intern until June 30, 2017 to finish out the project

Amendment Approved: (06/09/2017)

Overall Project Outcomes and Results:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI), University of Minnesota and US Forest Service (USFS) collaborated on a project targeting the lack of diversity in Minnesota's natural resource professional workforce. To increase involvement in our state's natural resource community, we engaged under-represented urban youth and their families in natural resource programming tailored to their interests and needs.

CCMI developed an employment and education program for high school youth from under-represented communities in the Twin Cities. Over three years, 220 youth received career and academic counseling as well as natural resource experiences. Of that group, 34 youth – "the Bridges Crew" participated in an intensive summer program working alongside DNR and other agency staff. Weekly enrichment days and in-the-field experiences engaged youth in the science of natural resources restoration and management. Their final three weeks were spent working in the Superior National Forest, funded by USFS. Youth evaluations revealed that this capstone experience cemented the bonding experience among crew and with the natural world and showed that 87% of youth had more awareness of and interest in natural resource and natural resource careers than at the start of the program.

DNR hired and mentored five student workers who researched issues and solutions to increasing diversity in natural resource activities and careers. Their work led to the production of career brochures and activities that are widely used by the agency and others to attract a more diverse workforce. These interns planned organized crew projects and enrichment days. With DNR staff, they collaborated with partners to organize four annual events, marketed to and attended by under-represented communities, introducing over 1800 people per year to outdoor recreation. At these events, the interns shared information about careers and nearby opportunities to continue their outdoor adventures. A summary that outlines the program and lessons learned is available on CCMI's website.

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: Implement CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge) youth program

Description: CLIMB is a young adult professional recruitment and retention program which provides close-to-home opportunities designed to connect under-represented youth with nature and science-based learning experiences and skills.

The program will utilize close-to-home urban outdoor recreational and educational facilities to provide unique science focused work experience in the planning and implementation of resource management strategies and expose urban youth to a variety of natural resource careers. Youth will initially participate in basic conservation projects and training and progress to scientific-based natural resource management and research projects. Through these projects, both the youth and Conservation Corp project staff will work with natural resource professionals to expose them to range and variety of career opportunities available within the field. Youth who are interested and successful within the CLIMB program will be encouraged to apply to the Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program through the University of Minnesota Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$366,550
Amount Spent: \$363,564
Balance: \$2,986

Activity Completion Date: June 30, 2017

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. Program design and structure complete, ready for implementation.	January 1, 2015	\$ 12,000
2. MN DNR and Conservation Corps of MN will create partnerships with 2 schools; 2 recreation centers and 1 youth organization to provide outreach opportunities and encourage the participation of families in annual outdoor recreational events held in St Paul and Mpls.	January 1, 2015	In kind
3. Conservation Corps' four crew leaders will start in February of each year and complete training in youth education, leadership and natural resource management. Approximately 60 youth will start in March and participate in basic conservation projects and training. <i>These youth will comprise a pool of prospective CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge) youth eligible to continue in conducting more scientific-based natural resource management and research projects and attend Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) courses in the fall.</i>	July 1, 2015 July 1, 2016 July 1, 2017	$(\$56,280 \times 2 \text{ yrs}) =$ \$ 112,560
4. Prospective CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge) youth complete basic conservation training and projects. Interested CLIMB youth are recommended for <i>Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)</i> program. In the summer, twelve youth in good academic standing are selected by UMN PSEO Program staff and High School Counselors to continue to the PSEO Fall program. Ideally, these youth will be high school seniors.	July 1, 2015 July 1, 2016	$(\$25,000 \times 2 \text{ yrs}) =$ \$50,000
5. Conservation Corps crew leaders complete <i>specialized</i> training in youth education, leadership and natural resource management lead groups of CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge) youth involved with more scientific-based natural resource management and research projects.	January 1, 2016 January 1, 2017	$(\$54,297 \times 2 \text{ yrs}) =$ \$ 108,594
6. Crew Leaders will continue through the summer and into the fall. The 4 Crew Leaders will be responsible for leading the 12 youth in <i>scientific-based natural resource management and research projects</i> , under guidance of MN DNR staff. Twelve CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge) youth complete scientific natural resource management and research projects developed in collaboration with the MNDNR and take Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) natural resource and environmental science courses through the University of MN.	January 1, 2016 January 1, 2017 June 30, 2017	$(\$39,698 \times 2 \text{ yrs}) =$ \$79,396

. Conservation Corps assists MN DNR and UMN in the collaborative evaluation of the project successes and challenges to be used to adapt the program to ensure program success in to the future.	June 30, 2017	\$ 4,000
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Activity Status as of January 1, 2015:

<u>Deliverable/Outcome</u>
1. Program design and structure complete, ready for implementation.
<p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring session has been designed and the program structure is in place for a March 2015 implementation date for 60 youth. • Summer session has been designed and the program structure is being finalized for a for a June 2015 implementation date for 12 youth on a career path in natural resources. • Fall session has been designed and the program structure is in place for a September 2015 implementation date for 60 youth and for PSEO student involvement. • MN Department of Natural Resources, University of Minnesota, and Conservation Corps have developed a framework and specific responsibilities for supporting youth as they continue through the program and into natural resource careers.
2. MN DNR and Conservation Corps of MN will create partnerships with 2 schools; 2 recreation centers and 1 youth organization to provide outreach opportunities and encourage the participation of families in annual outdoor recreational events held in St Paul and Mpls.
<p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Corps is an approved community partner of Saint Paul Public Schools and Minneapolis Public Schools. • Conservation Corps staff have met with St. Paul Public Schools and will soon meet with Minneapolis Public Schools to further the partnership and collectively focus on PSEO support for high school students interested in natural resource college and careers. • Conservation Corps has partnerships with 8 recreation centers. These and other recreation centers will be involved with programming during the project period. • Conservation Corps is developing partnerships with a number of youth organizations. Right Track, from the City of Saint Paul, is one example. Corps staff are also in discussions with other youth organizations and that will be brought in as the program becomes firmly established.
3. Conservation Corps crew leaders will start in February of each year and complete training in youth education, leadership and natural resource management.
<p>Approximately 60 youth will start in March and participate in basic conservation projects and training. These youth will comprise a pool of prospective CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge) youth eligible to continue in conducting more scientific-based natural resource management and research projects and attend Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) courses in the fall.</p>
<p>Started; Not complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment is underway for crew leaders for the February 2015 start date. Youth recruitment starts near the end of December.
4. Prospective CLIMB (<i>Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge</i>) youth complete basic conservation training and projects. Interested CLIMB youth are recommended for <i>Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)</i> program.
<p>In the summer, twelve youth in good academic standing are selected by UMN PSEO Program staff and High School Counselors to continue to the PSEO Fall program. Ideally, these youth will be high school seniors.</p>
Not Started

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The University of Minnesota, MN DNR, and Conservation Corps are working with youth alumni who are still in high school to support them in applying for PSEO and in pursuing college education in the natural resources.
5. Conservation Corps crew leaders complete <i>specialized</i> training in youth education, leadership and natural resource management lead groups of CLIMB (<i>Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge</i>) youth involved with more scientific-based natural resource management and research projects.
Not Started <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This activity will start once crew leaders have been hired in early 2015.
6. Crew Leaders will continue through the summer and into the fall. The 4 Crew Leaders will be responsible for leading the 12 youth in <i>scientific-based natural resource management and research projects</i> , under guidance of MN DNR staff. Twelve CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge) youth complete scientific natural resource management and research projects developed in collaboration with the MNDNR and take Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) natural resource and environmental science courses through the University of MN.
Not started.
7. Conservation Corps assists MN DNR and UMN in the collaborative evaluation of the project successes and challenges to be used to adapt the program to ensure program success in to the future.
Not started.

Activity 1 Details (As of January 1, 2015)

Developing the program design and structure

MN DNR, University of Minnesota, and Conservation Corps staff have been meeting monthly to develop the program design and structure. The design and structure has been developed and specific responsibilities have been delineated. While the first activities with youth are not scheduled in the work plan to start until 2015, the respective staff have been working to connect high school youth with PSEO options and college programs, as appropriate for the students' current grade level. The staff met with a fall cohort of youth participants with the Conservation Corps to outline what a college and career pathway would look like in natural resources. Staff are following-up with these youth to connect them with different resources to support them in their pursuits.

Recruitment

Conservation Corps is in the midst of recruiting leaders for the 2015 program year. The leader positions were posted to college online job boards that serve 80 state and private colleges and universities in Minnesota. Position posted to Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, The Corps Network and the AmeriCorps web-site. An announcement was sent to over 2,500 Corps alumni and partners and have posted information about apprentice positions to multiple social media outlets, including Facebook and Twitter.

The Conservation Corps is also preparing for youth recruitment to start in late December. Corps staff worked with MN DNR and U of M staff to update the application to better determine interest and eligibility for pursuing a college and career pathway in natural resources through PSEO. The application will be posted on the Conservation Corps website. Notices will be sent to local school districts, youth serving organizations, and program alumni in early January 2015. Recruitment will also involve social media outlets.

Activity Status as of July 1, 2015:

Deliverable/Outcome

<p>1. Program design and structure complete, ready for implementation.</p> <p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring session has been designed and the program structure is in place for a March 2015 implementation date for 60 youth. • Summer session has been designed and the program structure is in place for a June 2015 implementation date for 12 youth on a career path in natural resources. The youth will be working with and learning from DNR staff Monday-Thursday each week. Fridays will connect the youth with professionals in a variety of roles in natural resources and provide in-depth introduction to different disciplines, including researchers, biologists, enforcement officers, resource managers, and others. A partnership with the US Forest Service will add three full weeks onto the summer programming beyond what was planned and introduce the students to even more natural resource work and professionals in northern Minnesota. • Fall session has been designed and the program structure is in place for a September 2015 implementation date for 60 youth and for PSEO student involvement. • MN Department of Natural Resources, University of Minnesota, and Conservation Corps have developed a framework and specific responsibilities for supporting youth as they continue through the program and into natural resource careers.
<p>2. MN DNR and Conservation Corps of MN will create partnerships with 2 schools; 2 recreation centers and 1 youth organization to provide outreach opportunities and encourage the participation of families in annual outdoor recreational events held in St Paul and Mpls.</p> <p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Corps is an approved community partner of Saint Paul Public Schools and Minneapolis Public Schools. • Conservation Corps staff have met with St. Paul Public Schools and will soon meet with Minneapolis Public Schools to further the partnership and collectively focus on PSEO support for high school students interested in natural resource college and careers. • Conservation Corps has partnerships with 8 recreation centers. These and other recreation centers will be involved with programming during the project period. • Conservation Corps is developing partnerships with a number of youth organizations. Right Track, from the City of Saint Paul, is one example. Corps staff are also in discussions with other youth organizations and that will be brought in as the program becomes firmly established.
<p>3. Conservation Corps crew leaders will start in February of each year and complete training in youth education, leadership and natural resource management.</p> <p>Approximately 60 youth will start in March and participate in basic conservation projects and training. These youth will comprise a pool of prospective CLIMB (<u>C</u>ritical-science <u>L</u>earning <u>I</u>ntegrative <u>M</u>etro <u>B</u>ridge) youth eligible to continue in conducting more scientific-based natural resource management and research projects and attend Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) courses in the fall.</p> <p>Started; Not complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Corps staff implemented a comprehensive recruitment plan intended to attract youth participants interested in a long-term career in natural resource management and to attract qualified crew leaders. Staff attended job fairs and community events and gave presentations at schools. Staff also reached out to target audiences through connections with community leaders. As a result, 78 people applied for 20 leader positions and 181 people applied for 60 youth positions.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twelve youth were selected for the CLIMB Crew for the 2015 summer. While not all youth will be attending PSEO in the fall, they are all interested in natural resource management and most have long-term aspirations of environmental careers. All youth have completed an introductory semester with the Conservation Corps afterschool program.
<p>4. Prospective CLIMB (<i>Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge</i>) youth complete basic conservation training and projects. Interested CLIMB youth are recommended for <i>Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)</i> program.</p> <p>In the summer, twelve youth in good academic standing are selected by UMN PSEO Program staff and High School Counselors to continue to the PSEO Fall program. Ideally, these youth will be high school seniors.</p>
<p>Started; ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The youth enrolled in the spring semester with the Conservation Corps’ afterschool programming completed basic conservation training and projects. Projects included habitat restoration, construction of wildlife structures, trail maintenance, and stormwater BMP improvements. Training supported the work activities and provided foundational natural science knowledge, in addition to relevant career exploration. • The University of Minnesota, MN DNR, and Conservation Corps worked with youth alumni who are still in high school to support them in applying for PSEO and in pursuing college education in the natural resources. This activity is ongoing. • Youth interested in PSEO were encouraged to apply to various educational institutions, including the University of Minnesota. In total, four youth applied to PSEO this year; one has been accepted and three are awaiting confirmation of acceptance. While not all youth continuing into the summer CLIMB crews will be enrolled in PSEO in the fall, all youth on the crew are interested in careers in natural resources and are well-positioned to gain strong knowledge of the field. In addition to PSEO application support, Conservation Corps staff worked one-on-one with youth to determine if other options that provided academic rigor were a better fit. A number of youth identified Advanced Placement (AP) classes, College in the Schools (CIS), and accelerated classes as better options at this point. Many youth also worked with Corps staff and high school counselors to make plans to pursue PSEO or other academically rigorous classes in the future.
<p>5. Conservation Corps crew leaders complete <i>specialized</i> training in youth education, leadership and natural resource management lead groups of CLIMB (<i>Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge</i>) youth involved with more scientific-based natural resource management and research projects.</p>
<p>Started; ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders began their training in February 2015. Training included the areas of natural resource management best practices, natural sciences, leadership, and youth education and development. Natural resource management best practice trainings included prairie restoration, trail building, forest restoration, and water quality management. Natural science training included plant identification, fire ecology, and invasive species. Leadership trainings included diversity, team-building, conflict resolution, and communication. Youth education and development trainings included teaching techniques, addressing youth issues, fostering youth voice, facilitation with intention, and reaching hard to reach youth.
<p>6. Crew Leaders will continue through the summer and into the fall. The 4 Crew Leaders will be responsible for leading the 12 youth in <i>scientific-based natural resource management and research projects</i>, under guidance of MN DNR staff.</p> <p>Twelve CLIMB (<i>Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge</i>) youth complete scientific natural resource management and research projects developed in collaboration with the MNDNR and take Post Secondary</p>

Enrollment Options (PSEO) natural resource and environmental science courses through the University of MN.
<p>Started; ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twelve CLIMB youth will start scientific natural resource management and research projects this summer. The projects and additional training opportunities were developed in collaboration with the MN DNR and the University of Minnesota. Projects currently on the schedule include invasive species removal and trail maintenance, stream bank erosion monitoring, and tree inventories. As previously noted, not all youth will be enrolled in PSEO in the fall semester, but all have long-term interest in the natural resource field. A detailed description of the activities completed this summer will be provided in future status reports.
7. Conservation Corps assists MN DNR and UMN in the collaborative evaluation of the project successes and challenges to be used to adapt the program to ensure program success in to the future.
Not started.

Activity 1 Supplementary Information (As of July 1, 2015)

While the enrollment for PSEO is not as many as hoped for in this first year, some progress has been made. Four youth applied to PSEO for the fall of 2015; one was accepted at the University of Minnesota and three others are awaiting responses. Three additional students are planning on applying to PSEO, but the application deadlines are not until the end of June for their school of choice (e.g. MCTC). Most of these seven total applicants are juniors. There are three youth who were sophomores this year and plan on applying to PSEO next year, with the assistance of the Corps staff. One lesson learned in this project has been that for some youth other options that challenge them academically might be a better fit at this point in their life. Several youth are interested in a career in natural resources, but found that academic options such as Advanced Placement (AP) classes, College in the Schools (CIS), and accelerated classes were more appropriate at this point. Corps staff was able to provide assistance to these young people and help them identify how these challenging studies will support them in their long-term career aspirations.

Conservation Corps staff are using these lessons learned and creating a robust system of supports for students. This will provide support to students to continue on their college and career pathway through various channels into a career in the natural resources. For some students, it is clear that PSEO is the challenge they need and are ready to take on. For other students, they are ready for other academic challenges that still move them on the path to a career in natural resources. Conservation Corps staff will continue to create this robust system of supports during the next year and hope to share these lessons with other agencies and organizations who engage high school students in environmental activities.

This project increases the Conservation Corps' capacity to support youth over the course of a year. One youth who initially joined the program in Fall 2014 applied again in Spring of 2015 and is now a member of the summer CLIMB crew. Sustained interaction is important in working with youth and this project paves the way for Corps staff to continue to help this youth find ways to translate her interest in working outdoors and the skills she's learned so far to a rewarding college and career path.

Another youth, in her application for the summer CLIMB crew, wrote, "...learning about the environment and what it had to bring made me love it more and it inspired me in so many ways. Opening my mind to things I never knew. I would be a different person if I hadn't learned about the environment and what it could give." This summer, this young person will continue to learn and be inspired as she makes connections with natural resources professionals from the Department of Natural Resources, the US Forest Service and the University of Minnesota. She will take on challenging projects, learn new skills and explore ongoing research. She will be moving on to college in the fall and Corps staff will support her this summer as she prepares for the transition and considers her specific course of study.

Activity Status as of January 1, 2016:

Deliverable/Outcome
<p>5. Conservation Corps crew leaders complete <i>specialized</i> training in youth education, leadership and natural resource management lead groups of CLIMB (<i>Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge</i>) youth involved with more scientific-based natural resource management and research projects.</p> <p>Completed year one; Ongoing for year two.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following up on the specialized training completed in the spring, crew leaders as well as the youth crews received ongoing training as the summer progressed. Training was specific to the projects and activities, outlined in section 6. Project managers regularly met with and mentored crew leaders to provide more training and guidance on youth education and leadership.
<p>6. Crew Leaders will continue through the summer and into the fall. The 4 Crew Leaders will be responsible for leading the 12 youth in <i>scientific-based natural resource management and research projects</i>, under guidance of MN DNR staff. Twelve CLIMB (<i>Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge</i>) youth complete scientific natural resource management and research projects developed in collaboration with the MNDNR and take Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) natural resource and environmental science courses through the University of MN.</p> <p>Completed for year one; Ongoing for year two.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the summer of 2015, the Corps hired two summer youth crews, comprised of youth who had previously worked for the Conservation Corps' Youth Outdoors afterschool program or had other environmental work or science experience. Conservation Corps crew leaders provided additional training to the crew members and led them in completing more advanced field projects. Notable projects included streambank erosion monitoring for the Department of Natural Resources, forest stand inventory on University of Minnesota land and invasive species management. Crews spent every other week at Afton State Park, where they completed longer-term projects such as trail maintenance. Crews installed drainage features throughout the park to ensure the sustainability of hiking trails. Additionally, the crews formed a connection with Park Managers and had a sense of ownership over these projects as they returned to the site regularly throughout the summer. Throughout the summer, crews spent each Friday working closely with professionals at the Department of Natural Resources or the University of Minnesota. Youth learned about ongoing research projects from graduate students and professors at the University of Minnesota and were able to visit research sites in person. Staff members from a variety of divisions in the Department of Natural Resources presented information about their careers. Afterward youth were able to have one-on-one conversations with those professionals. The US Forest Service provided financial and logistical support to the Conservation Corps for work on the Superior National Forest so the youth were able to finish their summer working on trail maintenance projects in northern Minnesota, while staying at Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center. This essentially added three weeks of experience to the summer session beyond what was originally planned. Through this project, youth came together to work on technical trail projects, built on their knowledge of state land management by learning about land management from a federal agency, and participated in the adventure-based education programming offered at Wolf Ridge.

- Seven of the Bridges youth are either currently enrolled or will be enrolled in dual credit (PSEO, AP, IB, CIS, etc.) classes in the spring or following school year. Four youth are interested in a career in natural resources and one is on a direct pathway towards a career as a conservation officer with the DNR.
- The Corps has continued to provide supportive services to Bridges youth in the form of in-person meetings, email communication, and alumni engagement events. All Bridges youth have the opportunity to utilize the college and career readiness resources provided by the Corps at any time during or after their participation in the summer program.

7. Conservation Corps assists MN DNR and UMN in the collaborative evaluation of the project successes and challenges to be used to adapt the program to ensure program success in to the future.

Project team members met regularly through the summer and fall to develop and coordinate activities. Evaluations of successes and challenges were discussed, with input from crew leaders and youth. These mid-course evaluations will influence the programs and activities for the coming year.

Activity 1 Supplementary Information (As of January 1, 2016)

One of the Bridges youth joined the program knowing he had an interest in natural resources, but was only at the beginning stages of exploring his college and career options. Through his experience in both Youth Outdoors and Bridges, conversations with Corps staff, focused college exploration, and informational sessions with various professionals at the DNR, this youth is now on a path to becoming a conservation officer. Once he graduates from high school in the spring, he plans to attend either Century College or Inver Hills Community College to earn his peace officer certification. After obtaining certification, his goal is to attend the University of Minnesota College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences and eventually secure a conservation officer position with the Minnesota DNR.

Looking ahead, the Conservation Corps, the University of Minnesota, the U.S. Forest Service, and the DNR are collaborating to design and facilitate information sessions for youth interested in pursuing dual enrollment options and careers in natural resources. In conjunction with targeting recruitment efforts, we hope that the information sessions will more effectively engage youth with high levels of interest in dual enrollment options and natural resources.

We are also developing a model for connecting highly interested youth to professionals in the natural resources field through more targeted efforts, such as informational interviews and job shadowing opportunities.

Activity Status as of July 1, 2016:

Deliverable/Outcome
<p>3. Conservation Corps crew leaders will start in February of each year and complete training in youth education, leadership and natural resource management.</p> <p>Approximately 60 youth will start in March and participate in basic conservation projects and training. These youth will comprise a pool of prospective CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge) youth eligible to continue in conducting more scientific-based natural resource management and research projects and attend Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) courses in the fall.</p>
<p>Completed for year one; Ongoing for year two.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Corps staff implemented a comprehensive recruitment plan intended to attract youth participants interested in a long-term career in natural resource management and to attract qualified crew leaders. Staff attended job fairs and community events and gave presentations at schools. Staff also reached out to target audiences through connections with community leaders.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twelve youth were selected for the Bridges Crew for the 2016 summer. All youth selected had indicated significant interest in natural resource management and have long-term aspirations of environmental careers, even though some are not currently pursuing PSEO. Of the twelve youth: 2 will be taking International Baccalaureate courses in the fall, 2 will be taking College in the Schools courses in the fall, 1 will be taking Advanced Placement courses in the fall, 2 are pursuing PSEO either in the fall or in the following academic semesters, and 3 will be starting their freshman year of college.
<p>4. Prospective CLIMB (<i>Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge</i>) youth complete basic conservation training and projects. Interested CLIMB youth are recommended for <i>Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)</i> program.</p> <p>In the summer, twelve youth in good academic standing are selected by UMN PSEO Program staff and High School Counselors to continue to the PSEO Fall program. Ideally, these youth will be high school seniors.</p>
<p>Completed for year one; Ongoing for year two.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The youth enrolled in the spring semester with the Conservation Corps’ afterschool programming completed basic conservation training and projects. Projects included habitat restoration, construction of wildlife structures, trail maintenance, and stormwater BMP improvements. Training supported the work activities and provided foundational natural science knowledge, in addition to relevant career exploration. • The University of Minnesota, MN DNR, and Conservation Corps worked with youth alumni who are still in high school to support them in applying for PSEO and in pursuing college education in the natural resources. This activity is ongoing. • Youth interested in PSEO were encouraged to apply to various educational institutions, including the University of Minnesota. In total, five youth applied to PSEO this year. Unfortunately, none were accepted to the UMN PSEO program. While not all youth continuing into the summer CLIMB crews will be enrolled in PSEO in the fall, all youth on the crew are interested in careers in natural resources and are well-positioned to gain strong knowledge of the field. In addition to PSEO application support, Conservation Corps staff worked one-on-one with youth to determine if other options that provided academic rigor were a better fit. Many youth identified Advanced Placement (AP) classes, College in the Schools (CIS), and accelerated classes as better options at this point. Youth also worked with Corps staff and high school counselors to make plans to pursue PSEO or other academically rigorous classes in the future.
<p>5. Conservation Corps crew leaders complete specialized training in youth education, leadership and natural resource management lead groups of CLIMB (<i>Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge</i>) youth involved with more scientific-based natural resource management and research projects.</p>
<p>Completed for year one; Ongoing for year two.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders began their training in February 2016. Training included the areas of natural resource management best practices, natural sciences, leadership, and youth education and development. Natural resource management best practice trainings included prairie restoration, trail building, forest restoration, and water quality management. Natural science training included plant identification, fire ecology, and invasive species. Leadership trainings included diversity, team-building, conflict resolution, and communication. Youth education and development trainings included teaching techniques, addressing youth issues, fostering youth voice, facilitation with intention, and reaching hard to reach youth.
<p>6. Crew Leaders will continue through the summer and into the fall. The 4 Crew Leaders will be responsible for leading the 12 youth in <i>scientific-based natural resource management and research projects</i>, under guidance of MN DNR staff.</p>

<p>Twelve Bridges youth complete scientific natural resource management and research projects developed in collaboration with the MNDNR and take Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) natural resource and environmental science courses through the University of MN.</p>
<p>Completed for year one; Ongoing for year two.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twelve Bridges youth have started scientific natural resource management and research projects this summer. The projects and additional training opportunities were developed in collaboration with the MN DNR and the University of Minnesota. Field projects currently scheduled include invasive species removal and trail maintenance, stream bank erosion monitoring, tree inventories, seedling monitoring and tree pruning. Training days will include fish sampling and measuring, water quality testing, restoration site monitoring, terrestrial invasive species identification, field data collection and scheduled time for one-on-one conversations with DNR staff members. As previously noted, not all youth will be enrolled in PSEO in the fall semester, but all have long-term interest in the natural resource field. A detailed description of the activities completed this summer will be provided in future status reports. Of the Bridges youth, two will be attending college in the fall, five will be enrolled in a dual credit program (e.g. College in the Schools, AP or IB classes), and at least two are interested in pursuing PSEO for the following year.
<p>7. Conservation Corps assists MN DNR and UMN in the collaborative evaluation of the project successes and challenges to be used to adapt the program to ensure program success in to the future.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project team members met monthly to develop and coordinate activities. Evaluations of successes and challenges were discussed, with input from crew leaders and youth. The formative evaluations from last year influenced the programs and activities for this summer. We will conduct formative evaluations again this year and will continue to adapt the program based on feedback received. A final project evaluation will be completed prior to the project end date of July 1, 2017.

Activity 1 Supplementary Information as of July 1, 2016

The summer CLIMB crews provide youth with an opportunity to stay connected to the Conservation Corps and to natural resources work over multiple years. For example, one youth who worked on a CLIMB crew in summer 2015 also worked for the fall after-school program that year and then applied to return to Bridges in 2016. In her 2016 application she indicated, "I want to continue working with the Youth Outdoors program because this helped me realize what I'd like to study in college. I hope to learn about more opportunities in careers with working in the outdoors." She graduated high school this spring and reports, "I plan on majoring in Environmental Studies in college this fall."

Activity Status as of January 1, 2017:

Deliverable/Outcome
<p>5. Conservation Corps crew leaders complete <i>specialized</i> training in youth education, leadership and natural resource management lead groups of CLIMB (<i>Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge</i>) youth involved with more scientific-based natural resource management and research projects.</p>
<p>Completed for year two.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following up on the specialized training completed in the spring, crew leaders as well as the youth crews received ongoing training as the summer progressed. Training was specific to the projects and activities, outlined in section 6. Project managers regularly met with and mentored crew leaders to provide more training and guidance on youth education and leadership.

6. Crew Leaders will continue through the summer and into the fall. The 4 Crew Leaders will be responsible for leading the 12 youth in *scientific-based natural resource management and research projects*, under guidance of MN DNR staff. Twelve CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge) youth complete scientific natural resource management and research projects developed in collaboration with the MNDNR and take Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) natural resource and environmental science courses through the University of MN.

Completed for year two.

- In the summer of 2016, the Corps hired two summer youth crews, comprised of youth who had previously worked for the Conservation Corps' Youth Outdoors afterschool program or had other environmental work or science experience. Conservation Corps crew leaders provided additional training to the crew members and led them in completing more advanced field projects.
- Notable this year was the diversity of field projects which included tree pruning and assisting with a forestry research project by searching for seedlings and taking measurements, erosion control, seeding and invasive species removal.
- Crews worked at Afton State Park, where they continued some of the work started in 2015, including invasive plant species management.
- Throughout the summer, crews spent each Monday working closely with professionals at the Department of Natural Resources or the University of Minnesota. Youth learned about ongoing research projects from graduate students and professors at the University of Minnesota and were able to visit research sites in person. Staff members from a variety of divisions in the Department of Natural Resources presented information about their careers. Afterward youth were able to have one-on-one conversations with those professionals.
- The US Forest Service provided financial and logistical support to the Conservation Corps for work on the Superior National Forest so the youth were able to finish their summer working on trail maintenance projects in northern Minnesota. Crews camped during the week, learning valuable outdoor skills and connecting with fellow crew members after work. During the weekends, crews stayed at Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center and were able to take advantage of the Center's environmental education programming. Through this project, youth came together to work on technical trail projects, built on their knowledge of state land management by learning about land management from a federal agency, and participated in the adventure-based education programming offered at Wolf Ridge.
- At the end of the summer, eight of the Bridges youth expressed that they are more likely to consider a career in natural resources. Three started college in the fall of 2016, one intending to major in Environmental Studies. This spring, Corps staff will connect with participants to support them in pursuing dual enrollment options (including Post Secondary Enrollment Options)
- The Corps has continued to provide supportive services to Bridges youth in the form of in-person meetings, email communication, and alumni engagement events. All Bridges youth have the opportunity to utilize the college and career readiness resources provided by the Corps at any time during or after their participation in the summer program.

7. Conservation Corps assists MN DNR and UMN in the collaborative evaluation of the project successes and challenges to be used to adapt the program to ensure program success in to the future.

- Project team members met regularly through the summer and fall to develop and coordinate activities. Evaluations of successes and challenges were discussed, with input from crew leaders and youth. The 2016 schedule was planned with this input in mind. At the end of the summer, project members held another meeting including crew leaders to discuss highlights and areas for improvement.

All members of the CLIMB crews had previous experience with Conservation Corps programming, some over multiple years. Additionally, three members of this summer's crews applied to return to the Corps for the fall after-school program. The CLIMB crews allowed Conservation Corps to engage interested students in programming throughout the year.

Final Report Summary:

Program Design and Structure

This program was designed to begin in the spring of each year, engaging 60 youth in basic conservation training. This provides many youth with a first job experience and often their first experience working in the outdoors. The spring program is designed as a basic introduction to natural resources work. Some youth learn they very much want to continue in the natural resources field; some youth may opt for other field experiences.

Summer sessions were designed to hire 12 youth on a career path in natural resources. Youth worked primarily with DNR staff Monday – Thursday in 2015 and spent Fridays connecting with professionals in a variety of roles in natural resources and provide in-depth introduction to different disciplines, including researchers, biologists, enforcement officers, resource managers, and others. In 2016, networking and education days were switched to Mondays, at the suggestion of 2015 participants.

A partnership with the US Forest Service added three full weeks onto the summer programming beyond what was planned and introduce the students to even more natural resource work and professionals in northern Minnesota.

The program designed worked well, allowing ample time for youth to connect with professionals in the field while also developing their practical skills in the field

Partnerships with schools, recreation centers and youth organizations.

Conservation Corps is an approved partner of Saint Paul Public Schools and Minneapolis Public Schools. These school systems serve the majority of students involved in Conservation Corps programming, including the CLIMB crew. Sustained relationships with the schools are key to recruitment and to program quality as Conservation Corps can gain a better understanding of how to structure program elements to complement in-school learning.

Through the Corps' sustained relationship with Saint Paul Public Schools in particular, youth who complete at least 80% of scheduled program hours will be recommended for 1-2 units of work-based learning credit. If this work can continue in the future, the Corps could consider developing additional curriculum that would align with the requirements for science-based credit and work more closely with specific science educators (partnering with an Advanced Placement Environmental Science class, for example).

The Corps has partnered with 10 recreation centers in Saint Paul and Minneapolis. The recreation centers provide a meeting place for youth crews during the academic year program. While crews are focused on education and job-readiness activities, the recreation centers provide indoor space where crew leaders can facilitate lessons. The partnerships with recreation centers allows programming to happen directly in multiple neighborhoods and communities. When applying for a job at Conservation Corps, youth indicate their first and second choice for meeting location, meaning they can work directly in their communities. Meeting at recreation centers is one way to reduce transportation as a barrier to participation.

Youth and leaders also participated in annual outdoor recreational events organized by the DNR and others such as Take Aim at Summer Fun. They were able to encourage family participation as well.

Crew Leadership Training

Since February 2015, 11 individuals served as crew leaders for CLIMB crews (there were four leaders each year but one individual served two consecutive years as a CLIMB leader). They primarily served 1700-hour full terms of AmeriCorps service. Through their work on this project and others, they contributed over 15,500 total hours of service. Those members served just over 9,000 hours specifically on this project. Each year, training for AmeriCorps members included:

- Field Safety and Risk Management
- Natural Resources Management
 - Water quality
 - Forest restoration
 - Trail maintenance and construction
 - Prairie restoration
 - Invasive plant identification and management
 - Hand and power tool maintenance and operation
- Diversity in the workplace
- Team dynamics and conflict resolution
- Leadership and facilitation
- Youth development
- Environmental education

Through a combination of training and service, AmeriCorps members prepare for future employment and earn education awards that can be applied toward existing student loans or future tuition. Following their service, crew leaders have gone on to a variety of jobs, including a Natural Resources Technician for the City of Saint Paul, a Park Ranger for the National Park Service, a position in Information Technology and a position with Tree Trust (a nonprofit similar to Conservation Corps) working with youth and young adults engaged in conservation. One former crew leader—who was part of the pilot CLIMB crew in 2015—now works full-time for Conservation Corps and helps to manage youth programs (including this project through June 30, 2017).

Basic Youth Crew Training, Projects and Education Mentorship

From March 2015 to June 2017, Conservation Corps enrolled 287 youth in its after-school job program, in which youth learned basic natural resources management skills and completed conservation projects. Paid assignments also included college and career-readiness activities including resume development, college and career days featuring presentations from the University of Minnesota, the Department of Natural Resources, the United States Forest Service and college representatives.

Semester	Youth enrolled	Hours of work and training
Spring 2015	60	4546.25
Fall 2015	56	4039.75
Spring 2016	47	3991.5
Fall 2016	61	5497.5
Spring 2017	63	5589
TOTALS	287	23,664

In general, youth recruitment was successful. Over several years, Corps staff have developed relationships with staff at high schools as well as staff with other youth-serving organizations. Staff visit classrooms and post information in schools and community centers. Youth program alumni share information about the program as well – many youth learn about the program from friends or family members who previously participated. Recruitment for the fall can be a bit more challenging than recruitment for the spring as the recruitment efforts take place in late summer when school is not yet in session. The lower enrollment seen in spring of 2016 was largely due to challenges in recruiting for AmeriCorps crew leaders. The year started with fewer leaders; to keep the desired ratio of adult leaders to youth crew members, the program enrolled fewer youth that spring.

AmeriCorps programs across the country experienced similar challenges recruiting members in 2016 but all positions were filled eventually and the 2017 positions were filled before the February start date.

Summer CLIMB Crew Training

From the spring of 2015 to the spring of 2017, Conservation Corps enrolled 287 prospective CLIMB youth crew members in the school-year job program which provided opportunities to complete basic conservation training and projects. Through this, youth learned about Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) at the University of Minnesota and other universities and colleges in the Twin Cities metro area.

At the outset, the primary focus was on PSEO at the University of Minnesota but we learned that including a variety of options best met the needs of youth. The PSEO program at the University of Minnesota is highly competitive; accepted students have an average GPA of 3.92. Some students may be academically prepared for PSEO yet not carry quite that high GPA. Records indicate that one youth was accepted to the program. The University of Minnesota's program also tends to require a significant commitment to time on campus. Transportation as well as competing demands on time (such as family obligations and extra-curricular activities) can be barriers to participation in PSEO.

To address these barriers, we encouraged youth to explore other available options for earning college credit while still in high school (dual enrollment). This included PSEO programs at other institutions (such as Saint Paul College, Concordia College, Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Century College and Metro State), Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses and College in the Schools. For the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years, 5 youth reported enrollment in a PSEO program. However, 44 reported they were on track to earn college credit through other dual enrollment programs, which is significant. As the financial burden of higher education rises, earning tuition-free college credit can be very beneficial.

Specialized Leader Training

Beyond the natural resources material, Leadership trainings included diversity, team-building, conflict resolution, and communication. Youth education and development trainings included teaching techniques, addressing youth issues, fostering youth voice, facilitation with intention, and reaching hard to reach youth.

Following up on the specialized training completed in the spring, crew leaders as well as the youth crews received ongoing training as the summer progressed. Training was specific to the projects and activities. Project managers regularly met with and mentored crew leaders to provide more training and guidance on youth education and leadership.

Overall, training was well-suited to the needs of the program and the projects. However, Corps staff always consider ways to improve training and over the course of the project, there were some additions. For example, leaders became more familiar with data collection in the field so that they could also teach youth this skill. Additionally, in the spring of 2017 leaders completed a Youth Mental Health First Aid course.

Summer Crew Projects and Activities

From 2015 – 2017, the Corps hired two summer youth crews each year, comprised of youth who had previously worked for the Conservation Corps's Youth outdoors afterschool program or had other environmental work experience. Projects and additional training opportunities were developed in collaboration with the MN DNR and the University of Minnesota and included:

- invasive species management
- trail maintenance, including longer-term projects at Afton State Park
- stream bank erosion monitoring for the Department of Natural Resources
- tree inventories on University of Minnesota and Department of Natural Resources land

The program design included one day a week specifically for additional training or networking opportunities with natural resources professionals. In 2015 these days were scheduled for Fridays. In 2016, education and training days were scheduled on Monday, a decision informed by feedback from leaders and youth. Education and training days included:

- Learning about ongoing research from graduate students at the University of Minnesota
- Visiting the Department of Natural Resource's Central Office and meeting with staff from a variety of divisions

In each year of the program, not all youth enrolled in CLIMB also enrolled in PSEO. As noted above, not all PSEO programs are the best fit for youth, who may have competing demands on their time (such as family obligations or extracurricular activities). On the other hand, some youth who did pursue PSEO were unavailable for the summer CLIMB crew. However, all youth who participated in CLIMB indicated some long-term interest in the natural resource field.

The US Forest Service provided financial and logistical support to the Conservation Corps for work on the Superior National Forest so the youth were able to finish their summer working on trail maintenance projects in northern Minnesota, while staying at Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center. This essentially added three weeks of experience to the summer session beyond what was originally planned. Through this project, youth came together to work on technical trail projects, built on their knowledge of state land management by learning about land management from a federal agency, and participated in the adventure-based education programming offered at Wolf Ridge.

Project Evaluation and Adaptations

For the duration of the project, team members met regularly – approximately once a month to develop and coordinate activities. At the end of each summer, team members held a debrief meeting with crew leaders to solicit input on project work and program design. Leaders also debriefed with youth crew members and distributed a program survey, designed to capture youth input on the program. The results of debrief meetings and surveys informed subsequent decisions around programming.

At the end of the project in 2016, team members conducted a lengthy debrief meeting that included discussions of ways to collaborate in the future, should funding become available. The support of staff at the DNR and the University of Minnesota have benefited youth participants and will continue to benefit youth interested in natural resources.

Youth Outcomes

For CLIMB crews, Conservation Corps hired 13 youth in 2015, 12 in 2016 and 11 for the start of the summer in 2017. 100% of CLIMB crew youth participants in 2015 and 2016 reported that they learned about environmental jobs they didn't know about before participating. 85% reported that they could see a future for themselves in natural resources. Youth also indicated that their project work was valuable to the environment and that they learned a lot through field projects and education days. See 2015 CLIMB Youth Crew Survey and 2016 CLIMB Youth Crew Survey (Section IX Visual Elements) results for additional details.

The combination of hands-on experience in natural resource field work and college and career support affected the career direction of many youth in the program. For example, one youth who participated in the summer 2015 pursued PSEO at Concordia College and increased her involvement in clubs during her junior year of high school. She also pursued AP classes in the fall of 2015 through the spring of 2017. She indicated a strong interest in majoring in Environmental Science in college saying, "Conservation Corps really allowed me to identify what I would like to spend the rest of life doing, helping the environment." A youth who participated in the summer of 2016 is now majoring Biology and reports, "I'm currently in an Environmentally Concerned Club (thanks to Conservation Corps for sparking my interest!)...I'm also currently researching intern opportunities that have to do with environmental concerns—specifically with parks, forests or the DNR." The depth and breadth of project

work and education these youth completed was a direct result of the collaboration between the Corps and the Department of Natural Resources and University of Minnesota. With the DNR and University of Minnesota's access to diverse project work and exciting research topics, youth had a rich experience over the summer.

ACTIVITY 2: Identify interests in and barriers to diverse community involvement

Description: Project partners and collaborating partners will work together to develop at least two internship positions that will identify natural resource and recreational interests of Minnesota's diverse communities, develop solutions to participation in the outdoors and evaluate the project successes and challenges to better continue the diversification of the natural resource professional community.

The first internship, during first year of project, will focus on Identifying outdoor recreational and environmental educational needs and interests of under-represented urban youth, their families and community partners. The intern will work with partners to utilize existing knowledge and experience to identify and develop solutions to identified barriers to participation in outdoor recreation and choose natural resource careers. This information will be used to refine programming and recreational opportunities to ensure under-represented urban families will begin to be comfortable in participating in outdoor recreation, contribute to natural resource protection efforts and support their youth in pursuing natural resource professional career opportunities.

During the third year of the project, the second internship will focus on assessing and evaluating the project successes and continued challenges. The data that is gathered will be used by the project partners to adapt the program components to ensure continued success in to the future. Assessment, evaluation and adaptive management of this project will ensure the program is fulfilling participant's needs and resulting in more diverse community involvement. Having representation from a diverse community will ensure interest and support for natural resource protection.

In addition, CLIMB Youth will be informed of other internships available at MN DNR and other natural resource agencies.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 2:

15952252

ENRTF Budget: \$49,450
Amount Spent: \$49,149
Balance: \$301

Activity Completion Date:

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. At least two MN DNR internships, paid based on DNR rates. Under-represented youth's outdoor experiences and interests are bridged with the steps necessary to enter into University of MN natural resources programs. Through internships they will gain professional experience that will bolster their knowledge, skills, and real work experience necessary to be qualified for natural resource careers.	June 30, 2017	\$49,450

Activity Status as of January 1, 2015:

Deliverable/Outcome
1. At least two MN DNR internships, paid based on DNR Rates
The hiring process for the first MN DNR student is nearly complete, with an expected start date of mid-January. Background research on the natural resource and outdoor recreation interests of under-represented communities has begun.
Existing programs and strategies, internal and external, on natural resource career recruitment.

Activity Details as of January 1, 2015

- The MN DNR worked with Conservation Corp and U of MN to develop a position description for a student worker who will focus on Identifying outdoor recreational and environmental educational needs and interests of under-represented urban youth, their families and community partners. The intern will work with partners to utilize existing knowledge and experience to identify and develop solutions to identified barriers to participation in outdoor recreation and choose natural resource careers.
- Hiring process is finalizing in December and a student will begin work in January 2015.
- MN DNR staff has met with outside organization to identify opportunities for collaboration and to better understand existing programs with similar or related goals:
 - Urban Roots
 - St Paul Parks and Recreation
 - Wilderness Inquiry
 - Great River Greening
 - Metro State Career Office
 - Friends of the Mississippi
- MN DNR staff has met with internal staff to identify opportunities for collaboration and to better understand existing programs with similar or related goals:
 - Ft Snelling staff and regional parks interpretive staff (Parks and Trails)
 - Fisheries outreach program including FIN, Minnaqua)
 - Regional staff in Enforcement, Ecological and Water Resources and Forestry
 - MN DNR Statewide Volunteer Coordinator
 - MN DNR Affirmative Action Officer

Activity Status as of July 1, 2015:

Deliverable/Outcome
1. At least two MN DNR internships, paid based on DNR Rates
The first MN DNR student worker was hired as of February 1. Local and national research on the environmental education needs and interests of underrepresented youth was compiled and summarized. We met with DNR outreach staff and those of outdoor organizations that are working with this target audience. Based upon this information, we have created, tested and refined a career pathways card game/activity for use in a classroom or with conservation corps/clubs, stand-alone materials for use at career fairs at a high school or junior college and activities suitable for use at outdoor recreation outreach events such as Get Outdoors Day, June 13 Powderhorn Park.

Activity Details as of July 1, 2015

- A student worker was hired and began work on Feb 1.
- To address the issue of increasing the diversity of participation through outreach to a broader audience of high school youth and their families through new initiatives and enhancing existing efforts, the DNR:
 - Reviewed research on this issue and met with Met Council Researcher on this topic, as well as our own regional outreach staff, to understand best practices.
 - Met with and worked with non-profits working with youth on same issues (Wilderness Inquiry, Great River Greening, Friends of Mississippi River, Urban Roots, College Possible),
 - Developed enhancements to existing outreach events – a career booth and follow-up information flyers, “If you liked archery today, try” for outdoor activities.
 - Expanded outreach efforts in the neighborhood through partnership with St Paul, Explore Outdoor St Paul, and local high schools.
 - Discussed a larger agency strategy for more inclusive recruitment with DNR Diversity officer, Vikki

Getchell (materials such as the flyers we have developed will inform, if not used as is, as part of a larger DNR recruitment strategy).

- Recruited DNR staff to participate in career mentoring events organized by Great River Greening and College Possible

Activity Status as of January 1, 2016:

Deliverable/Outcome
1. At least two MN DNR internships, paid based on DNR Rates
The first MN DNR student worker continued through the summer, her time ending August 30. This student worker continued outreach to local community groups, developed and implemented career activities to engage youth and families, supported new outreach events, and scheduled Bridges crew projects that connected the youth to DNR field staff.
A second MN DNR student worker was hired and started in December of 2015. She is identifying more community groups that represent diverse cultural groups, especially those that have youth career programs and will be meeting with them to develop relationships, learn from them more about barriers and opportunities for collaboration.

Activity Details as of January 1, 2016

The student worker and Regional Planner:

Worked with partners with similar goals to engage diverse communities and introduce them to outdoor recreation and natural resources and career pathways.

- Met regularly with project partners to plan and coordinate and continuously improve the activities and outcomes of this project
- St Paul Parks and Recreation – implemented Explore Outdoor Program, partnered to provide Public Land Day event at Hidden Falls Park.
- Wilderness Inquiry – co-hosted youth outdoor recreation event for Freedom Schools and cohosted a tour of Warner Road youth restoration activities for the Children in Nature Network Young leaders workshop. Recruited Wilderness Inquiry to provide canoe activity at Public Lands Day at Hidden Falls Park
- College Possible – explored opportunities for collaboration in future and recruited DNR staff to participate in CP career day
- Great River Greening – explored opportunities for collaboration in future and recruited DNR staff to participate in 3 Field Days career talks
- Urban Roots – collaborated with and planned outdoor recreation activities to engage Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood and Sibley Homes neighborhood.
- Convened DNR regional staff engaged in outreach to learn from their experiences about barriers to participation and pursuit of natural resource career path. Discussed solutions to those barriers that can be incorporated into next year’s activities. Increased internal awareness of the issue and solutions.
- Minneapolis Parks and Recreation. Participated in their Green Corp career day for high school aged youth.

Used knowledge gained on barriers to participation to refine programs and support new outreach events.

- Continued partnership with St Paul Parks, Minneapolis Parks and Stearns County to successfully improve outreach and diversity of participation in events in the neighborhoods designed to introduce people to a huge variety of outdoor recreation activities and knowledge of outdoor careers (Powderhorn Park 600+ attendees, Take a Day Off on the Mississippi, 500+ attendees including Boys and Girls Club, Public Lands Day Hidden Falls Park 300+ attendees – first time event held included transportation for 50 family

members of the nearby Ethiopian community) Youth Outdoors and Urban Roots conservation crews participated and volunteered in the Hidden Falls event.

- Collaborated with Wilderness Inquiry to host at DNR Warner Road. Introduced 50 Freedom School youth, 6-8th graders, to archery, fishing and geocaching/hiking. Enlisted Urban Roots, a youth non-profit conservation crew, to lead the geocaching event. Included career discovery hatchery tour.

Developed and implemented career activities to engage youth and families

- Added DNR/conservation career activity booth to existing and new outreach events
- Developed new career pathway materials, presentations
- Participated in career fairs that had a high percentage of under-represented youth
 - Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Green Team Career Fair (60 youth)
 - Humboldt High (St Paul Westside) FFA Agriculture and Natural Resources Career Day (100+ youth)
- Hosted two day-long career days for Bridges crew at the DNR Central Office to expose youth to natural resource career paths that are not “out in the field” such as GIS, HR, Planning, Engineering and Landscape Architecture (30 staff participated, all divisions represented)
- Led career activity as part of the fall Youth Outdoors career day (50 youth)

Scheduled natural resource projects that connected the youth conservation crews to DNR field staff

- Organized 6 weeks of themed field activities, with staff their sharing knowledge, skills and career path – crews alternated weeks doing these projects, with a week at Afton State Park where they worked with many DNR staff over the summer.
 - Stream restoration (Fisheries)
 - Stream bank measurement (Ecological and Water Resources)
 - Forest community survey, School Forest projects (Forestry)
- Developed 8 weeks of themed science activities for Urban Roots crew
- Provided training to Urban Roots crew on design of natural areas
- Arranged for Urban Roots crews to present their management plan to staff, then the Regional Managers at Central Region, followed by career conversations. Roots crew members then presented to the Senior Management Team at DNR’s Central Office, gaining valuable skills in presentation.

Refined programming and recreational opportunities

- Developed and implemented new outreach strategies to welcome people living near outdoor recreation events with more targeted marketing, connecting with nearby social service agencies, working on transportation barriers.

Activity Status as of July 1, 2016:

Deliverable/Outcome
1. At least two MN DNR internships, paid based on DNR Rates
As noted in the last update, a second MN DNR student worker was hired and started in December of 2015. She has met with community groups that represent diverse cultural groups, especially those that have youth career programs and will be meeting with them to develop relationships, learn from them more about barriers and opportunities for collaboration. A third MN DNR student worker was hired and started April of 2016. He has been connecting with new cultural groups, in particular the East African community. A fourth student worker was hired this month to assist with graphics and communications.

Activity Details as of July 1, 2016

The DNR Student Workers and Regional Planner:

Worked with partners with similar goals to engage diverse communities and introduce them to outdoor recreation and natural resources and career pathways.

- Collaborated with St Paul Parks and Recreation, Wilderness Inquiry, MN Bicycle Alliance, National Park Service MNNRA, CLUES Cominidades Latinas en Servicio, Urban Roots and CCMI to organize and implement Take Aim at Summer Fun, May 26, 2016. 450 participants from diverse cultures enjoyed a wide range of outdoor recreation activities: archery, canoeing, fishing, climbing, birding, geocaching and bicycling. As one group leader said “our students now know what a canoe is and they won’t be bewildered when they see this on a standardized test.” The kids fearlessly tried many thing for the first time. They learned about natural resources and careers from DNR non-game wildlife, forestry and project staff. Our student workers played a key role – expanding our communications and outreach to new cultural groups and staffing a booth activity highlight natural resource career pathways.
- Collaborated with Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board, Forest Service, National Park Service MNNRA, REI, Jeffers Foundation, and Minneapolis Parks Foundation to organize and implement Get Outdoors Day at Powderhorn Park. Activities were similar to Take Aim. Student workers played a similar role.
- Met with the Karen Organization of Minnesota, Hmong American Partnership, Ka Joog (Somali Youth organization), and Ubah Medical Academy High School and Twin Cities International Elementary School to discover ways we can connect with their constituents – families and students. These efforts have resulted in increased participation in our events described in bullet points one and two. We will also be working with youth during the school year, to participate in career events/talks as needed.
- Participated in events hosted by others, such as Freeze Fest in St Paul, sponsored by St Paul Parks and Recreation and Great River Greening’s career talks at their youth planting events at Troutbrook.
- Engaged with local environmental youth groups to participate in restoration projects on our headquarters campus. Our student worker led a group of over 90 youth from Higher Ground Middle School Academy on an Earth Day clean-up. We’ve worked with Friends of Mississippi and Harding Earth Club to set up Garlic Mustard management plots so they can see the effect of their efforts over the seasons. We provided Urban Roots conservation crew with presentations on designing gardens with native plants and are implementing their plans this June.

Used knowledge gained on barriers to participation to refine programs and support new outreach events.

- Addressing the barrier of “not feeling welcome” our student workers added language to our event flyer, with words of welcome to the new communities we connected with us.
- Student workers continue to research and add to our knowledge of how to better connect with groups having lower participation rates. We are working with outreach staff in our region to incorporate this knowledge into a more strategic approach for DNR Central Region outreach to more diverse communities.

Developed and implemented career activities to engage youth and families

- Met with Achieve Minneapolis Career Center staff to review a Natural Resource Career notebook we are drafting for use in high school career centers.
- Revised our DNR booth for large public events to be more engaging and welcoming to a variety of ages and audiences.

Scheduled natural resource projects that connected the youth conservation crews to DNR field staff

- The student interns have organized a wide range of natural resource experiences and connections to DNR staff with all divisions of the DNR. By the end of June they will met with our stream monitoring program and groundwater staff, camped and conducted management at Afton State Park, getting in a birding walk with our naturalist. Many more encounters are planned for the summer, involving field experiences with Wildlife, Fisheries and EWR at Vermillion WMA and Eagle Creek, Forestry at Sand Dunes and Sand Stone State Forests, fish surveys in a metro lake and others. Youth will also meet with more staff at career meet-ups at our regional headquarters and state office building.

Activity Status as of January 1, 2017:

Deliverable/Outcome
1. At least two MN DNR internships, paid based on DNR Rates
During this period, the three student workers hired earlier in the year continued their work. The two outreach workers continued research and engagement work with youth crews, families and community organizations. One has gone on to permanent state employment doing outreach work to the East African Community and one has begun graduate school. The communications student working under the direction of our Affirmative Action Officer created the content for a career guide and continues to work on developing web content.

The DNR Student Workers and Regional Planner:

Worked with partners with similar goals to engage diverse communities and introduce them to outdoor recreation and natural resources and career pathways. For example:

- Met regularly with project partners to plan and coordinate and continuously improve the activities and outcomes of this project
- Ka Joog – Met with the leader of this group with a mission to enrich the lives of Somali American Youth. Participated in their annual street festival with career and natural resource information.
- St Cloud Organizations – Met with the organizations YMCA and Unite Cloud to promote *Take a Day Off on the Mississippi River*. Connected with several other East African and refugee support groups to promote the event.
- St Paul Parks and Recreation – partnered to provide Public Land Day event at Hidden Falls Park and Outdoor Recreation day over MEA weekend.
- Wilderness Inquiry – co-hosted youth outdoor recreation event for Freedom Schools and recruited Wilderness Inquiry to provide canoe activity at Public Lands Day at Hidden Falls Park
- Urban Roots – collaborated with Urban Roots to provide their youth crew with challenging natural resource projects and outreach work, including a stream clean-up for Metro Deaf School.
- Minneapolis Parks and Recreation. Participated in their Green Corp career day for high school aged youth. Participated in 3 Career Panels for high school youth of color in city summer employment programs
- American Planning Association and American Society of Landscape Architects – hosted a presentation and discussion about the project to a group of 25 professionals interested in this topic.

Used knowledge gained on barriers to participation to refine programs and support new outreach events.

- Participated in Somali Independence Day celebration and learned the event is a very effective vehicle for reaching the great diversity of people living in south Minneapolis including the Latino and East African community.
- Continued partnership with Stearns County on Take a Day Off on the Mississippi resulting in over 800 attendees including 60 youth from the Boys and Girls Club. Our student worker did additional outreach to cultural communities, however the impact was limited and has caused us to rethink our St Cloud approach.
- Attracted a highly diverse crowd of over 600 participants to our Intro to outdoor recreation event at Hidden Falls Park – double from last year and once again. The nearby Ethiopian community enthusiastically returned, and over 30 diverse Youth Outdoors and Urban Roots conservation crews participated and volunteered at this event.
- Again we collaborated with Wilderness Inquiry to host 70 Freedom School youth, 6-8th graders, to archery, fishing, shelter building and birding/hiking at our DNR Warner Road campus. Learning from

experiences last year, we adjusted the activities to suit the age and “outdoor nature” comfort level of this group.

- DNR hosted neighborhood rec centers who brought 40 youth for an outdoors day, including archery, fishing and hiking activities.
- Provided outdoor recreation experiences to Bridges and Urban Roots crews who became experienced campers and were able to try out sports like fishing, canoeing and archery. All these activities combined to overcome barriers – these youth felt comfortable and excited to be outdoors.
- Engaged Youth Outdoors youth in a further refined DNR Career game, featuring a mock job fair and interview. Shared this activity to the Forest Service for their adaptation.
- Published a DNR Career Guide for use at career fairs, career centers, on the DNR website and public events
- Recruited staff to participate in Achieve Minneapolis career days at Minneapolis High schools.

Implemented natural resource projects that connected the youth conservation crews to DNR field staff

- Bridges crews engaged with at over 50 DNR staff representing all seven divisions, every level of the agency, including an Assistant Commissioner. Types of encounters included meet-ups to talk one-on-one about career paths, presentations and discussions with staff and receiving training from and working along with staff on projects. Tree pruning, GIS locating of research trees, invasive plant identification and mapping are some of the skills taught by DNR staff.

Final Report Summary:

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. At least two MN DNR internships, paid based on DNR rates. The DNR provided five different internships. Students gained professional experience that will bolster their knowledge, skills, and real work experience necessary to be qualified for natural resource careers. The fifth intern, who started in February, reviewed and compiled our ongoing assessments and documentation of the project. She compiled a database of workforce centers for future recruiting efforts, gained experience doing youth career outreach, developed engagement activities and planned Bridges crew experiences with DNR staff.	June 30, 2017	\$49,450

Detail

Providing intern positions

Over the course of this project, the DNR hired five student workers. These interns gained experience in outreach, communications, and natural resource topics.

The interns:

- Researched outdoor recreational and environmental education needs and interests of under-represented urban youth, their families and community partners. This information was continually added to throughout the project and was used to refine programming, recreational events and outreach.
- Participated fully in project planning, making arrangements for crew projects with DNR staff and making connections with diverse community groups.
- Produced or participated in program assessments and evaluations and proposed adaptive management strategies to improve outcomes for youth and families.
- Developed and delivered materials we used to improve communication and engagement about careers in natural resources:
 - Recruitment brochure content
 - Nature Path Career game
 - Event Booth activities

- Were exposed to and mentored by many different career professionals and pathways within the DNR and other natural resource agencies.

Insights

We learned that interns from diverse backgrounds

- are typically working more than one job, often have families and therefore need flexibility in hours and scheduling. Lack of benefits from an internship or a student worker position is just one reason they need to retain their other work.
- are good ambassadors when connecting with diverse community groups as well as the youth they interact with.

Sustained success with this project was made possible by having interns charged with the specific job duties of community outreach intern.

Gaining understanding of barriers and solutions to participation of under-represented youth and families

The DNR Student Workers and Regional Planner worked with partners with similar goals to identify natural resource and recreational interests of Minnesota's diverse communities, develop solutions to participation in the outdoors and evaluate the project success and challenges to better continue the diversification of the natural resource professional community. We engaged with the following organizations with similar goals, serving to greatly leverage the staff capacity of each organization to reach our goals:

- City and National Parks and Recreation and Resource staff in St Paul, Minneapolis and Stearns County, MNRRA, US Forest Service
- Outdoor Recreation Non-profits and for-profits: Wilderness Inquiry, REI
- Natural Resource Non-profits: Friends of Mississippi, Great River Greening
- College and Career Non-profits: College Possible, Achieve Minneapolis, Right Track St Paul
- Youth Employment/Conservation Non-profits: Urban Roots (as well as CCMI)
- High School and College Career Offices: Metro State, St Paul College, Century

Working with these partners, we refined our introduction to outdoor recreation events by adding activities that promoted awareness of local opportunities for free outdoor fun and awareness of career opportunities. We made connections with organizations representing diverse communities to learn about their interests, barriers to participation and how to best invite them to participate in our activities.

- Karen Organization of Minnesota, a nonprofit serving the Karen Community
- Ka Joog, a Somali Youth nonprofit
- Freedom School, a St Paul Public School summer program for culturally diverse students
- CLUES, a nonprofit organization serving Latinos in St Paul and Minneapolis
- Wellstone Neighborhood House at Sibley Manor, Ethiopian Community
- Hmong American Partnership
- Harding High School ROTC and Earth Club
- Stearns County YMCA
- Rochester's Riverside Elementary, a diverse school serving the city's neediest.

Insights

Cultural competency training is important and should be provided to natural resource agency employees. When interacting with ethnic and racial minorities we need to make sure we fully understand and are willing to learn about their cultures; the values, fears, and potential lack of interest they may have towards natural resource recreation or career fields.

Refining and Improving Outdoor Recreation Programming

We helped plan and in some cases hosted events and activity days for groups and the public – targeting our marketing to nearby diverse communities. Free activities included archery, climbing, canoeing and fishing. We know that one barrier to youth pursuing natural resource careers is the lack of knowledge or sanctioning by

parents or community leaders. We have developed engaging booth activities that promote awareness to families and youth about careers in conservation.

- Take Aim at Summer Fun – DNR’s office on St Paul’s East Side, 800 participants over two years
- Get Outdoors Day at Powderhorn Park in Minneapolis, 1500 participants over three years
- Take a Day Off on the Mississippi River in Stearns County, 1300 participants over two years
- Public Lands Day at Hidden Falls Park in St Paul, 900 participants over two years
- Freedom School Day with Wilderness Inquiry, 180 sixth through eighth graders from St Paul
- Commissioner’s Bike Ride, 50 participants from St Paul and Minneapolis

Insights

While we have improved our tools, many resources such as handouts and activities for a variety of age levels and languages are still needed to do effective outreach as they involve diverse community groups.

Our best results for increased awareness and attendance to programs required a multi-layered approach beyond listing the program on an agency website or in mainstream newspaper.

- Directly contacting community organizations via phone call and meeting to learn about the organization’s goals and interests, discussing common goals (such as the LCCMR goal to increase diversity involvement) and inviting the group to upcoming events that might be of interest to their community.
- Enlisting these organizations to bring groups to the event via their own transportation or provided transportation. This strategy is especially important for participants with limited English-language skill. For example, the Ethiopian groups coming to Public Lands Day had the comfort of their own leader and peer group at the event. The Karen Organization of Minnesota brought their teen group to Take Aim.
- Word of mouth promotion, such as at local community events, and then providing the flyer as a reminder of the details. Flyering alone in targeted areas can be effective, making extra effort to include apartment buildings and places of businesses with a diverse employee base.
- Tapping into the knowledge and connections of interns with ties to diverse communities. We included knowledge of a second language and cultural communities as a part of preferred qualifications when posting the student worker positions.

As well as hosting events, an effective way to connect with diverse urban communities is to participate in community events such as the Somali Ka Joog festival which attracts thousands of people of many cultures. These events allow DNR staff to learn about the cultures of our diverse community members and gather information about their feelings and attitude towards natural resource recreation and careers, and the barriers they face to both.

Increasing comfort in participating in natural resource protection

We engaged young people in natural resource projects, at the same time introducing them to DNR and other resource professionals and careers. Research has shown that repeated experiences develops an affinity with the environment.

- This April, 120 Higher Ground Middle Schoolers (primarily E. African) participated in a stream clean-up in 2016, followed by a Carlos Avery Tree Planting event in 2017.
- Approximately 30 youth from St Paul’s Harding High ROTC – volunteered at and participated at Take Aim over 2 years.
- Over 90 youth, over three years, from St. Paul’s Urban Roots conservation crews engaged with DNR staff to restore and monitor the Warner Road Campus over the course of the spring, summer and fall. Some of these youth participated in and led outdoor activities at our events. Many of these youth have multiple years on the crew.
- Bridges Crew Projects – our interns set up projects with DNR staff all over the metro and beyond, teaching the youth not only resource management skills, but also the science behind the work.

- Harding High Earth Club members, working in collaboration with Friends of the Mississippi ecologists, have been conducting fall and spring garlic mustard removal and monitoring at DNR's regional headquarters for the last two years— learning when removal works best and what plants thrive best after garlic mustard removal.

Insights

It is important to share with the youth the importance of their work and provide a variety of educational and work experiences for them so they can see the many opportunities the natural resources career field holds.

The biggest challenge involved planning work projects in advance and finding field staff willing and able to commit to working with high-school aged youth for any extended amount of time. Some staff have dedicated funding that restricted their ability to take the time needed to train and work with the youth on their field projects. As a whole, staff are constantly pressed for time to get everything they need to get done, even without taking the time to teach and guide youth crews. Some work is best done in smaller groups than the 8-person crews. Having the crew funded greatly increased the amount of time and willingness to host the youth for units that could identify projects that needed people power more than power tools or herbicides. Success was also improved when managers and supervisors understood the importance of engaging our next generation of conservationists.

While we offered individual job shadows, surprisingly few youth took up that offer. The group aspect of crew work seems to be a powerful component of high schooler's comfort with and interest in this work.

We have increased DNR staff capacity and comfort level in working with youth from different cultural backgrounds. In the three years of the project, well over 100 DNR staff have worked with urban youth as part of this project. Many of these staff do not have "outreach" as part of their job and gained valuable insight and appreciation of the youth they encountered.

Supporting youth in a pursuit of natural resource professional career opportunities

We produced career events, career materials and participated in high school and college career events throughout the urban core. Our interns and the Regional Planner

- developed the content for DNR recruiting materials that have been published and used throughout the agency. The need for this material was identified by DNR outreach staff who needed materials about careers beyond their own experience and knowledge.
- developed, with the Forest Service, a Nature Path career "game" has been used at many career events and will continue to be used.
- Developed and delivered a successful "meet-up" format for connecting youth with staff in a round robins of one-on-one conversations. This format has been used and adapted by other youth groups.
- Event booth activities designed to introduce families and youth to the DNR and conservation careers. We overcame the challenge of making this information fun and accessible by adapting attention getting tools like a spinning wheel, photo booths and craft projects that helped kids picture themselves as conservation officer, a forester, a park naturalist or a fisheries expert.

Insights

At most of the high school career events we attended, we were the only conservation career represented, suggesting a need for more participation by all conservation groups. We have compiled a summary of our career activities, materials and guidance to share with DNR and partner organizations.

V. DISSEMINATION:

Description: We will work with our partners at the University of Minnesota College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) and Conservation Corps of Minnesota (CCM) to identify opportunities and

venues for disseminating information and findings about this project. Documents prepared in connection with this project will be published and available free to citizens and will be posted at www.dnr.mn.gov. Conservation Corps of MN will be the primary disseminator and provide a link on their website describing the CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge) youth program www.conservationscorps.org. The partnerships developed with schools, recreation centers and youth organization will also serve as outlets for introducing families to outdoor recreational activities and career opportunities and to recruit youth to participate in the CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge) program. In addition, collaboration with other youth outdoor programs will provide the opportunity to promote and enhance the program.

Status as of January 1, 2015:

- CCM has posted information on CLIMB on their website:
<http://www.conservationscorps.org/newsroom2/2014/12/4/corps-launches-initiative-to-increase-diversity-in-natural-resource-professions>
- CCM has utilized partnerships with schools, recreation centers and youth organizations for recruitment of CLIMB participants.
- MN DNR has used the U of MN and CCM, as well as Metro State's network to disseminate the MN DNR student job posting.

Status as of July 1, 2015:

- CCMI and DNR have shared information on the program with the Outdoor Careers Advisory Committee, a group convened by Wilderness Inquiry, with participants from local, state and federal parks and youth employment programs.
- The University of Minnesota and CCM developed a Facebook group to share PSEO, career and educational information with CCM youth interested in applying to PSEO and the summer CLIMB program. Approximately 30 youth are members.
- DNR has shared career materials and project information with department leadership.

Status as of January 1, 2016:

- Ongoing meetings and interactions with local non-profits, schools and recreation centers to let them know about the program and approach
- Bridges information pages directed toward youth has been posted on the CCMI website
- Career pathway materials have been shared with DNR staff, CCMI and others, for their use and review

Status as of July 1, 2016:

- CCMI and the DNR continue to expand their collaboration with other youth-serving programs. We have worked to deepen engagement with existing partners (e.g. Urban Roots, Kitty Anderson Youth Science Center, Youth Farm) and create relationships with new partners (e.g. Wilderness Inquiry's new Youth Employment program, Como Zoo and Conservatory's new Conservation Engagement program).

Status as of January 1, 2017:

- CCMI and the DNR continue to expand their collaboration with other youth-serving programs. We have worked to deepen engagement with existing partners. Examples of new relationships include: DNR's discussions with St Paul Police Youth's engagement officer on St Paul's east side and continued discussions with Wilderness Inquiry's Conserve School.
- DNR has created a new career guide has been printed and used throughout the state. DNR's student worker is adapting that content for the agency's website.

Final Report Summary:

- CCMI will has created a Bridges page on their website that outlines the programs, goes and components.
- DNR has shared the career guide with all supervisors in the agency and will be posting them on their website for downloading.
- DNR continues to work with outside partners to continue our collaborations and accomplish new avenues to connect with new audience. For instance, on Aug. 12 we partnered with St Paul Public Housing to have a nature bike ride, with residents enjoying the outdoors with Commissioner Landwehr and Regional Director Keith Parker. In fall 2017 we will be partnering with Riverside Elementary in Rochester to put on a “Bear Creek” outdoors day and then monthly connections between DNR staff and fourth graders throughout the year.
- CCMI, DNR, US Forest Service will continue to collaborate on continuing components of the Bridges Crew to the extent future funding allows.
- Career engagement materials activities and guidance will be shared with organizations we have worked with throughout this project.

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:**A. ENRTF Budget Overview:**

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Explanation
Personnel:		
MN DNR Internships	\$49,149	Provides at least two internships.
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:		
Conservation Corp of MN	\$363564	Fund Staff to provide crew training, work with partners to develop community partnerships, participate in project evaluation and implement CLIMB (Critical-science Learning Integrative Metro Bridge) program. Crew Leaders; Youth Crew to implement CLIMB youth program.
TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:	\$ 412,713	

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: N/A

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000: N/A

Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation:

Total = 1.6 FTE (2 interns at 0.8 FTE, one during 1st year and one during 3rd year of project)

Conservation Corp of Minnesota = Total 22 FTE (Crew leaders account for 4 FTE, youth participants account for 6.5 FTE, and staff account for 0.5 FTE. While the grant period is for 3 years, CCM will be directly involved with programming for 2 years.)

B. Other Funds:

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
Non-state			
US Forest Service- Urban Connections Program	\$ 5,000	\$84,990*	Outreach activities, field trip

UMN-CFANS Faculty/Administrative Support (In-Kind Support)	\$ 20,000	\$26,016	Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) Coordination for 2 yrs
State			
MN DNR - Direct and Necessary	\$8,993	\$5,994	Direct and Necessary costs for appropriation.
MN DNR – Regional Planner MN DNR – Managing Supervisor	\$ 40,198	\$41,524 \$ 7,350	Project management, outreach .2 FTE, 3
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:	\$ 69,191	\$159,880	

*two grants were obtained from the USFS to fund three week stays/experience in Forest Service forests.

VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners:

Project partners receiving funds:

- University of Minnesota College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences \$84,000.00
- Conservation Corps of Minnesota \$363,564
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources \$49,149

Project partners not receiving funds:

- US Forest Service - Urban Connections Program

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy: This project established a focused approach to integrate diversity into the natural resource community and DNR workforce. This three-year comprehensive approach addresses the need to connect under-represented families and their communities with outdoor recreation and natural resource higher education to create a path to professional natural resource career opportunities. The project pathway takes under-represented urban youth from outdoor experience, to higher education, to real world natural resource management experiences and onto professional careers in natural resources. Their success will provide other youth with the familiar faces they need to be able to imagine themselves as part of the next generation of natural resource professionals. MN DNR, Conservation Corp of MN and UMN will continue to expand this program to ensure the DNR workforce becomes a reflection of the diverse faces of Minnesota.

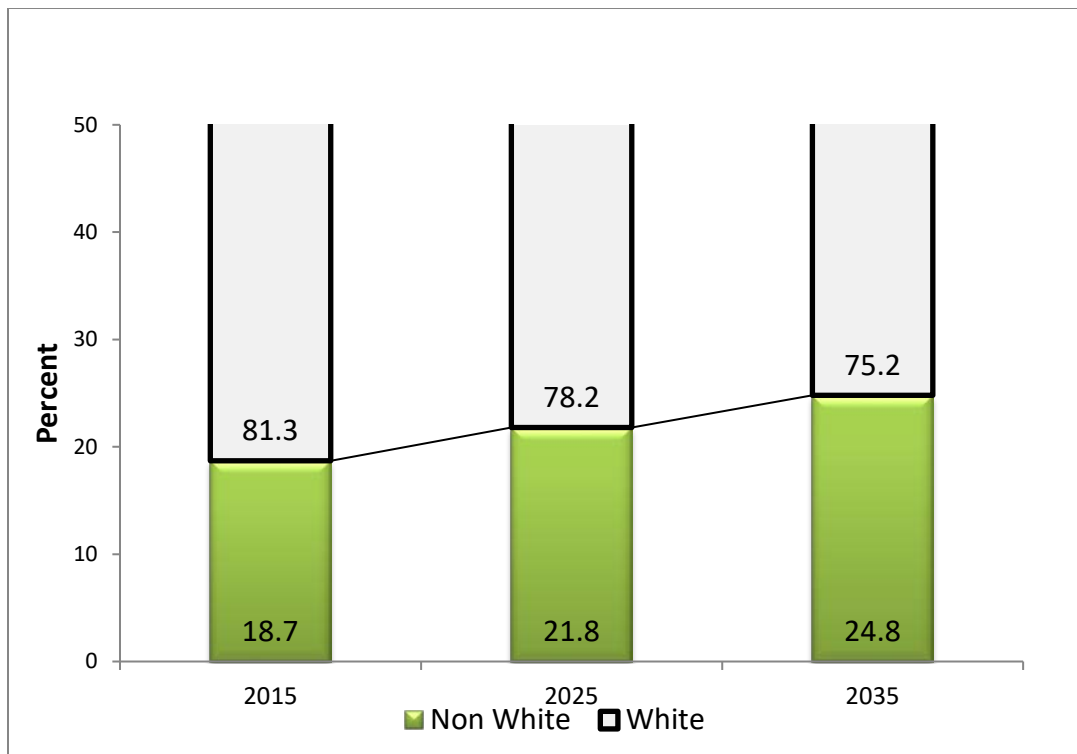
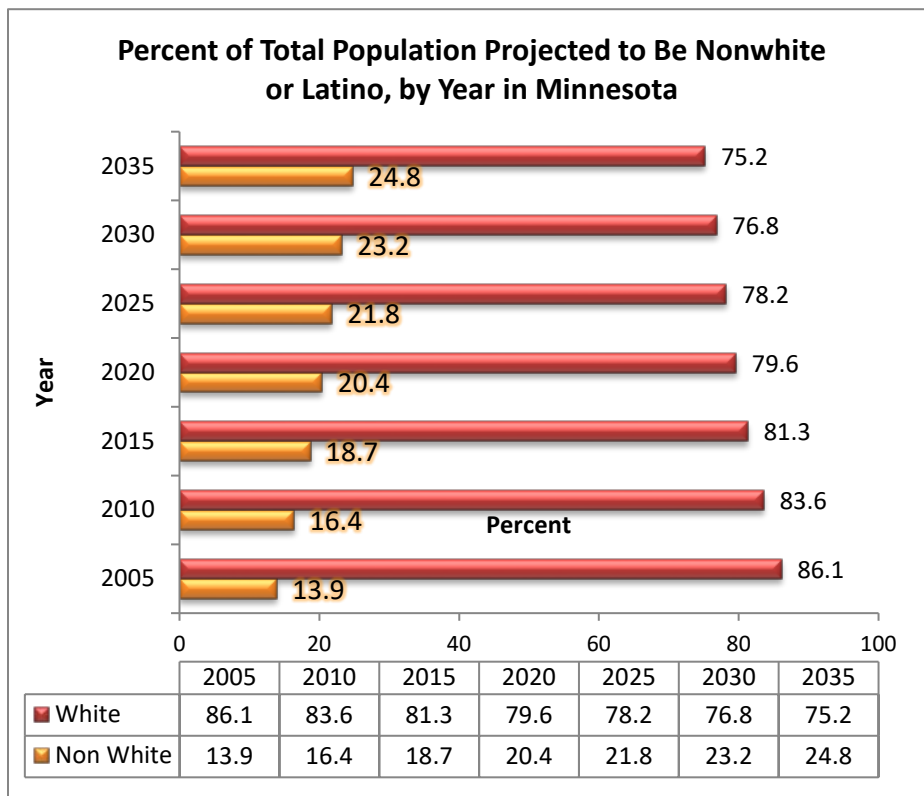
C. Spending History:

Funding Source	M.L. 2008 or FY09	M.L. 2009 or FY10	M.L. 2010 or FY11	M.L. 2011 or FY12-13	M.L. 2013 or FY14

VIII. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION LIST: N/A

IX. VISUAL ELEMENT or MAP(S):

Race Population Projections



2015 CLIMB Youth Crew Survey		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree / Strongly Agree
AVERAGE SCORES ENV AWARE, PERSONAL GROWTH & MY FUTURE						
Environmental Careers	I learned about environmental jobs that I did not know about before	0	0	2	7	100.0%
	I now know that there are a lot of different types of environmental jobs	0	0	4	5	100.0%
	I could see myself working in natural resources	1	0	7	1	88.9%
	I am now more likely to pursue a career in the environmental field	1	0	7	1	88.9%
	I would recommend an environmental career to a family member or friend	0	0	3	6	100.0%
Higher Education	I am more knowledgeable about going to college in the environmental field	1	0	4	4	88.9%
	I am more comfortable on a college campus	0	1	3	5	88.9%
	I am plan to attend college for an environmental degree	1	1	4	2	75.0%
One-Day Projects	The one-day projects were very valuable for the environment	0	0	6	3	100.0%
	The one-day projects challenged me	0	1	7	1	88.9%
	I learned a lot by completing the one-day projects	0	1	6	2	88.9%
	I really got to know my crew better on the one-day projects	0	2	4	3	77.8%
Week-long Projects	The week-long projects were valuable for the environment	0	0	2	6	100.0%
	The week-long projects challenged me	0	0	5	3	100.0%
	I learned a lot by completing the week-long projects	0	0	2	6	100.0%
	I really got to know my crew better on the week-long projects	0	0	2	6	100.0%
Friday Education Days	I learned a lot on the Friday education days	0	0	4	5	100.0%
	The Friday education days were fun	0	1	5	3	88.9%
	I met a lot of natural resource professionals on these days	0	0	4	5	100.0%

2016 CLIMB Youth Crew Survey		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree / Strongly Agree
AVERAGE SCORES ENV AWARE, PERSONAL GROWTH & MY FUTURE						
Environmental Careers	I learned about environmental jobs that I did not know about before	0	0	4	7	100.0%
	I now know that there are a lot of different types of environmental jobs	0	0	2	9	100.0%
	I could see myself working in natural resources	0	2	7	2	81.8%
	I am now more likely to pursue a career in the environmental field	0	3	7	1	72.7%
	I would recommend an environmental career to a family member or friend	0	0	8	2	100.0%
Higher Education	I am more knowledgeable about going to college in the environmental field	0	2	6	3	81.8%
	I am more comfortable on a college campus	0	2	6	3	81.8%
	I am plan to attend college for an environmental degree	0	5	5	1	54.5%
One-Day Projects	The one-day projects were very valuable for the environment	0	0	8	3	100.0%
	The one-day projects challenged me	0	2	7	2	81.8%
	I learned a lot by completing the one-day projects	0	0	8	3	100.0%
	I really got to know my crew better on the one-day projects	0	3	4	4	72.7%
Week-long Projects	The week-long projects were valuable for the environment	0	0	4	7	100.0%
	The week-long projects challenged me	0	0	4	7	100.0%
	I learned a lot by completing the week-long projects	0	0	6	5	100.0%
	I really got to know my crew better on the week-long projects	0	0	3	8	100.0%
Friday Education Days	I learned a lot on the Friday education days	0	0	4	7	100.0%
	The Friday education days were fun	0	2	4	5	81.8%
	I met a lot of natural resource professionals on these days	0	0	4	7	100.0%

X. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION REQUIREMENTS WORKSHEET: N/A

XI. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: N/A

XII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted no later than January 1, 2015, July 1, 2015, January 1, 2016, July 1 2016 and January 1 2017. A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2017.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund							
M.L. 2014 Project Budget							
Project Title: Diversifying Involvement in the Natural Resources Community							
Legal Citation: M.L. 2014, Chapter 226, Section 2, 09d							
Project Manager: Gina Bonsignore							
Organization: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources							
M.L. 2014 ENRTF Appropriation: \$ 416,000							
Project Length and Completion Date: #3 Years, June 30, 2017							
Date of Report: 08-31-17							
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Revised Activity 1 Budget 05/02/2017	Amount Spent	Revised Activity 1 Balance 05/02/2017	Revised Activity 2 Budget 05/02/2017	Amount Spent	Revsied Activity 2 Balance 05/02/2017	Revised Total Budget 05/02/2017
BUDGET ITEM							
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)							
2 MN DNR Interns, \$57,450 (100% salary, 0% benefits); 80% FTE, 1 year each internship				\$49,450	\$49,149	\$301	\$49,450
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts							
Conservation Corp of MN to fund Crew Leaders; Youth Crew, See Spread Sheet "CCMI Budget Detail"	\$366,550	\$363,564	\$2,986				\$366,550
COLUMN TOTAL	\$366,550	\$363,564	\$2,986	\$49,450	\$49,149	\$301	\$416,000

Conservation Corps of Minnesota Budget Detail

Personnel (Wages and Benefits)	Revised Activity 1 Budget 05/02/2017	Amount Spent
<i>Conservation Corps - Program Director; 2 years @ 0.10 FTE; 80/20 Salary/Benefits</i>	\$16,000	\$14,780
<i>Conservation Corps - Program Manager; 2 years @ 0.40 FTE; 80/20 Salary/Benefits</i>	\$44,229	\$44,229
<i>Conservation Corps - Assistant Program Manager; 2 years @ 0.40 FTE; 80/20 Salary/Benefits</i>	\$36,329	\$36,329
<i>Conservation Corps - Crew Leader; 2 years @ 4.00 FTE; 85/15 Salary/Benefits</i>	\$111,026	\$111,026
Equipment/Tools/Supplies		
<i>Conservation Corps - Personal protective and service supplies; 2 years</i>	\$11,750	\$11,750
<i>Conservation Corps - Meals and snacks; 2 years</i>	\$8,000	\$7,262
<i>Conservation Corps - Natural resource project supplies; 2 years</i>	\$2,000	\$1,874
<i>Conservation Corps - Hand tools and equipment; 2 years</i>	\$1,800	\$1,720
<i>Conservation Corps - Environmental education materials; 2 years</i>	\$1,200	\$378
Travel expenses in Minnesota		
<i>Conservation Corps - Fleet Lease (vehicle for each crew); 2 years</i>	\$35,540	\$35,540
Other		
<i>Conservation Corps - Youth Stipends; 60 per year @ 2 years (project total 120)</i>	\$98,676	\$98,676
COLUMN TOTAL	\$366,550	\$363,564

Revised Activity 1 Balance 05/02/2017	Activity 2 Budget	Amount Spent	Activity 2 Balance	Revised Total Budget 05/02/2017	Revised Total Balance 05/02/2017
\$1,220				\$16,000	\$1,220
\$0				\$44,229	\$0
\$0				\$36,329	\$0
\$0				\$111,026	\$0
				\$0	\$0
\$0				\$11,750	\$0
\$738				\$8,000	\$738
\$126				\$2,000	\$126
\$80				\$1,800	\$80
\$822				\$1,200	\$822
				\$0	\$0
\$0				\$35,540	\$0
				\$0	\$0
\$0				\$98,676	\$0
\$2,986				\$366,550	\$2,986

Conservation Corps summer CLIMB crews completed a variety of natural resources projects, primarily for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources but also on the Superior National Forest, though collaboration with the US Forest Service. These summer projects were more technical than the projects youth completed in the spring and fall. In the top row of photos below, youth are installing a drainage feature and signs at Afton State Park. The crew at the bottom is working on a bridge on a Superior National Forest trail.



Education and training was built into the program during the school-year and the summers for Conservation Corps youth. Youth who participated in the summer CLIMB crews received more advanced training and one-on-one meetings with natural resources professionals. Below, youth explore water quality sampling, field data collection, telemetry and bird banding.



DNR mentored 5 interns who:

- Researched issues and did outreach work with diverse communities
- Developed and implemented conservation career activities and materials
- Coordinated with DNR staff to organize natural resource projects for 32 Bridges youth and over 150 youth from other groups
- Helped plan and staff outreach events reaching 1800 participants
- Summarized and evaluated programs



Nuruldin Nur, Pa Her, Becky Boyer, Nicole Benert, Clare Kolars



connected crew members to DNR staff at office meet-ups and in the field



connected under-represented youth and families to natural resource projects, outdoor recreation opportunities and career information