

2018 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2023

PROJECT TITLE: Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers

PROJECT MANAGER: Mimi Daniel

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FUNDING SOURCE: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

LEGAL CITATION: M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 051

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$550,000

AMOUNT SPENT: \$543,000

AMOUNT REMAINING: \$7,000

Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results

The Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC) program fosters the next generation of environmental and natural resources professionals and enthusiasts. From 2019 to 2023, 45 students enrolled in the IDEC program learned about and gained hands-on experience in the environmental/natural resources field. As a result, as these students become professionals, they will bring diversity and innovation to natural resources management and conservation.

Overall Project Outcome and Results

While Minnesota's population continues to diversify and STEM-based jobs continue to increase, there has been no increase in the diversity of the nation's STEM workforce for more than a decade (as of 2016). Likewise, the state has been unable to attract representative numbers of ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, or women into the professional and technical STEM positions that make up nearly half of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) jobs. Over the next ten years (2016-2026), a significant percentage of positions with the state's environmental agencies will be at risk of retirement-related turnover.

Through a strategic partnership between the DNR, Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, this collaborative program aims to reduce and eliminate barriers that inhibit under-represented students from completing STEM degrees and obtaining environmental careers after graduation.

- In 2019, a cohort of 16 students enrolled in the Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers program. Of the 16 students, 12 graduated and obtained their STEM degrees, and two are completing their STEM degrees. Of the 12 students who graduated, five are in graduate school, five are working in environmental careers, and two are seeking employment.
- In 2020, a second cohort of 16 students enrolled in the IDEC program. Of the 16 students, six graduated and obtained their STEM degrees, and nine are still enrolled in the program, completing their STEM degrees. Of the six students who graduated, four are working in environmental careers, and two are in graduate school.
- In 2021, a third cohort of 13 students enrolled in the IDEC program. Of the 13 students, four graduated and obtained their STEM degrees, and nine are still enrolled in the program, completing their STEM degrees. Of

the four students who graduated, one is working in an environmental career, and three are currently completing summer internships with the state agencies involved in the IDEC program.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

Project information has been shared through CCMI's website, recruitment activities, and interviews with radio stations. When the project started, the project manager and program manager were interviewed by Minnesota Public Radio. In 2020 the project manager completed an interview with Sahan Journal. More information about the program can be found [Here](#). A student in the program shared her experience with her school and can be found [Here](#).