



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

M.L. 2020 ENRTF Work Plan (Main Document)

Today's Date: August 21, 2019

Date of Next Status Update Report: January 15, 2021

Date of Work Plan Approval:

Project Completion Date: December 31, 2021

Does this submission include an amendment request? __

PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota Freshwater Quest: Environmental Education on State Waterways

Project Manager: Julie Edmiston

Organization: Wilderness Inquiry

College, Department, or Division:

Mailing Address: 808 14th Ave SE

City, State, Zip Code: Minneapolis, MN 55414

Project Manager Direct Telephone Number: 612-676-9424

Email Address: julie@wildernessinquiry.org

Web Address: <https://herofortheplanet.org/mnquest/wildernessinquiry.org>

Location: Statewide

Total Project Budget: \$500,000

Amount Spent: \$0

Balance: \$500,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2020, Chp. xx, Sec. xx, Subd. xx

Appropriation Language:

PROJECT STATEMENT:

The Minnesota Freshwater Quest connects 10,000 diverse youth to Minnesota waterways across the state—using freshwater species as the hook for environmental education. More than the land of 10,000 lakes, Minnesota boasts 34,167 miles of rivers and streams and 28,176 different lakes, ponds, and wetlands. It is our collective responsibility to manage these waters. We need our next generation to protect our waters for generations to come—this begins with environmental and science education.

The Minnesota Freshwater Quest is a new project-based learning tool and framework connecting youth to information about threatened species and ecosystems throughout the state—guiding them on a “Quest” to discover and implement solutions to help in their local communities. The program is specifically tailored for Minnesota species and waterways. Through the Quest, students adopt a species, participate in hands-on environmental education on local waterways, collect and share water quality data through the worldwide database GLOBE (Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment), and complete a student-led project to improve their ecosystem—enhancing the environment for their adopted species.

This project implements the MN Freshwater Quest for the first time in communities throughout the state to:

- Connect diverse and underserved students to outdoor experiences that increase environmental stewardship among the next generation.
- Improve water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams through education, data collection, and real-world projects implemented by youth.
- Integrate hands-on science and environmental education activities into classroom learning, with an opportunity to recover academic credits in select districts.

II. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

First Update January 15, 2021

Second Update September 1, 2021

Final Report between project end (December 31) and February 15, 2022

III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1 Title: 10,000 Minnesota Youth Experience and Improve their Watershed

Description:

A newly developed online platform, The Minnesota Freshwater Quest, delivers environmental education through classroom-based instruction and hands-on learning in the outdoors. The Quest is successful in engaging students in environmental education; however, it has not yet been implemented throughout Minnesota. This project gives school districts the opportunity to participate in the Quest. Wilderness Inquiry will provide hands-on environmental education as part of the Quest to school districts reaching all regions of the state—including Albert Lea, Brainerd, Fergus Falls, Grand Rapids, International Falls, Saint Cloud, Thief River Falls, and the Twin Cities.

As part of the Minnesota Freshwater Quest:

Teachers register their classroom at <https://herofortheplanet.org/mnquest/>

1. Students enter their home zip code to learn about which species are imperiled in their local ecosystem, including amphibians, birds, dragonflies/damselflies, mussels, mammals, and reptiles.
2. Students “adopt” a species and learn about their watershed and what that species requires to thrive.

3. Students participate in an outdoor daylong environmental education experience to learn more about their species, collect water quality data, and analyze indicators of ecosystem health. *ENRTF funding allows 10,000 Minnesota youth to participate with Wilderness Inquiry.*
4. Students disseminate their water quality data through GLOBE—contributing to our understanding of the global environment.
5. Classrooms are encouraged to develop a project that improves the local watershed and positively impacts their chosen species. *A project partner, Captain Planet Foundation, provides mini-grants for these projects, with funding specifically for Minnesota schools.*

ACTIVITY 1 ENRTF BUDGET: \$500,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Minnesota Freshwater Quest disseminated as an environmental learning tool to more than 40 Minnesota school districts through directed outreaches. (Facilitated and Funded by Wilderness Inquiry In-Kind)	12/31/2020
2. 100 educators complete a Minnesota Freshwater Quest training to learn how to integrate the Quest into their existing school curriculum. (Facilitated by Wilderness Inquiry; Partially funded by ENRTF)	11/01/2021
3. 50 classrooms/teachers register for the Quest. (Facilitated by Wilderness Inquiry)	12/01/2021
4. 10,000 diverse youth experience environmental education along their local Minnesota waterways through activities such as collecting and disseminating water quality data, paddling in 24' Voyageur canoes, and learning about their ecosystem by "adopting a species." Water quality data is entered through the Freshwater Quest and disseminated through GLOBE. (Facilitated by Wilderness Inquiry; Funded by ENRTF) Approx. 125 events, average 80 youth each	12/31/2021

First Update January 15, 2021

Second Update September 1, 2021

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IV. DISSEMINATION:

Description:

Project updates will be shared with diverse stakeholders through print and web based updates such as annual reports, Wilderness Inquiry blogs, Freshwater Quest website highlights, and more. In addition, Wilderness Inquiry will work with partners such as the Minnesota Department of Education and present at various conferences to disseminate resources and opportunities for engagement and training.

The Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) will be acknowledged through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the [ENRTF Acknowledgement Guidelines](#).

First Update January 15, 2021

Second Update September 1, 2021

Final Report between project end (December 31, 2021) and February 15, 2022

V. ADDITIONAL BUDGET INFORMATION:

A. Personnel and Capital Expenditures

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

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: N/A

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

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: 26,928 hours (over 1.5 years)	Divide total personnel hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: 8.6 (1 year)
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Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation:

Enter Total Estimated Contract Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: 130 hours	Divide total contract hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: 0.06
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VI. PROJECT PARTNERS:

- A. Partners outside of project manager's organization receiving ENRTF funding (N/A)
- B. Partners outside of project manager's organization NOT receiving ENRTF funding

This project represents a large-scale collaboration with Wilderness Inquiry as the lead organization, coordinating with multi-sector partners. Key partners include:

- Minnesota School Districts: In addition to sharing the online Quest with all school districts throughout the state, this project directly engages school districts in hands-on outdoor learning.
- Captain Planet Foundation: With Wilderness Inquiry, Captain Planet Foundation tailored the Quest to Minnesota waterways and is now committed to launching across the state. Captain Planet Foundation has pledged \$25,000 to fund watershed improvement projects in Minnesota through the Quest.
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): The MN DNR is a key partner in program implementation as Wilderness Inquiry programs utilize public lands such as state parks and water trails.
- National Park Service (NPS): NPS provides in-kind support of staff time and materials for program implementation along the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

VII. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:

The Minnesota Freshwater Quest is a newly developed online platform that is specifically tailored to Minnesota waterways and species. ENRTF funds provide initial implementation funds to launch the Quest statewide, offering a platform for school districts to implement environmental education with hands-on learning experiences. Wilderness Inquiry is committed to enhancing and expanding the Quest over time with public and private long-term funding sources such as the Environmental Protection Agency, USDA Forest Service, Department of Education, foundations, corporations, and individuals.

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

- Project status update reports will be submitted during 2021
- A final report and associated products will be submitted by February 15, 2022 given the adapted timeline of the project

IX. SEE ADDITIONAL WORK PLAN COMPONENTS:

A. Budget Spreadsheet

B. Visual Component or Map

C. Parcel List Spreadsheet – N/A

D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements – N/A

E. Research Addendum – N/A

Attachment A: Project Budget Spreadsheet
 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
 M.L. 2020 Budget Spreadsheet

Legal Citation:

Project Manager: Julie Edmiston

Project Title: MN Freshwater Quest: Environmental Education on State Waterways

Organization: Wilderness Inquiry

Project Budget: \$500,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 1.5 years; December 31, 2021

Today's Date: August 21, 2019



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET		Updated Budget	Amount Spent	Balance
BUDGET ITEM				
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)		\$ 434,150	\$ -	\$ 434,150
Operations Director (.65FTE)(\$80,000 x 1.5 years) = \$78,000				
Program Manager (.75 FTE)(\$50,000 x 1.5 years) = \$56,250				
Program Coordinator (.75 FTE)(\$40,000 x 1.5 years) = \$45,000				
Program Coordinator (.75 FTE)(\$40,000 x 1.5 years) = \$45,000				
Finance and Administration (.5 FTE)(\$35,000 x 1.5 years) = \$26,250				
Part-time staff for warehouse, canoe and inventory maintenance and repairs; (Multiple personnel at \$18/hour x 2,300 hours/year x 1.5 years) = \$62,100				
Outdoor Leaders (1 to 7 staff/student ratio)(1,430 staff trail days x \$85) = \$121,550				
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts				
Contract for project evaluation to demonstrate success of implementation of Quest throughout the state. Contracts selected through a competitive bidding process.		\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies		\$ 26,350	\$ -	\$ 26,350
Environmental education program equipment for hands-on experiences including PFDs, paddles, first aid supplies, and other outdoor equipment and gear (\$11,000). Equipment maintenance and repair -- this program primarily utilizes existing equipment such as 24' foot Voyageur canoes; however these require annual maintenance and repair to use safely across the state (\$10,000). EcoSTEM water quality testing kits, species identification materials (6 kits x \$700 = \$4,200); teacher training materials and supplies (\$1,150)				
Travel expenses in Minnesota				
Transportation for Wilderness Inquiry staff to deliver environmental education events across the state via van with trailer and boats (Travel for 125 events x avg. 200 miles round trip x .58)		\$ 14,500	\$ -	\$ 14,500
Student transportation. When needed, Wilderness Inquiry assists with student buses to program locations near the school. (\$300 x 50 events) Schools cover transport when they are able.		\$ 15,000	\$ -	\$ 15,000
COLUMN TOTAL		\$ 500,000	\$ -	\$ 500,000
SOURCE AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT				
	Status (secured or pending)	Budget	Spent	Balance
Non-State:				
Minnesota Public School Districts	Pending	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 100,000
Minneapolis Foundation (Curriculum development that supports project)	Secured	\$ 15,000	\$ -	\$ 15,000
Captain Planet Foundation (Mini-grants for Minnesota schools to participate)	Secured	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ 25,000
State:				
In kind:				
National Park Service: Program staff / Rangers in MNRRA in-kind	Secured	\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ 50,000
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: Program staff in-kind	Secured	\$ 16,833	\$ -	\$ 50,500
Wilderness Inquiry: Staff benefits; additional staff support incl. Exec. & Prog. Dir; equipment and facilities; staff food and lodging; insurance; teacher stipends	Secured	\$ 133,333	\$ -	\$ 133,333
Other ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS AWARDED IN THE LAST SIX YEARS				
	Amount legally obligated but not yet spent	Budget	Spent	Balance
M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 02, Subd. 05 Floating Classroom		\$ 1,200,000	\$ 764,257	\$ 435,743
M.L. 2014, Chp. 226, Sec. 02, Subd. 09c UEE		\$ 1,093,000	\$ 1,062,565	\$ 30,435



Minnesota Freshwater Quest



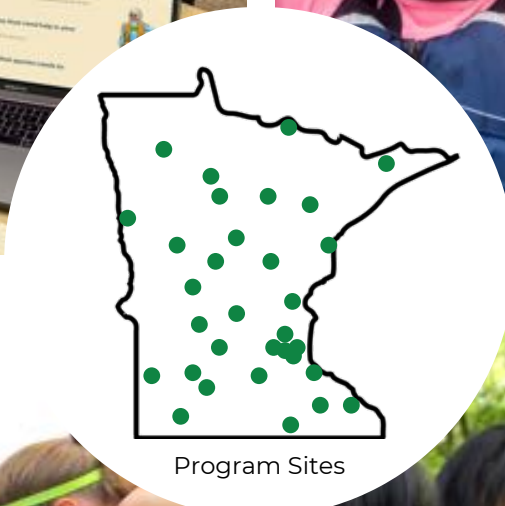
Connect 10,000 diverse MN students to outdoor experiences that increase environmental stewardship.



Improve water quality through education, data collection, and student-led projects.



Integrate hands-on science and environmental education into classroom learning.



Program Sites

