



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

## M.L. 2024 Approved Work Plan

### General Information

**ID Number:** 2024-099

**Staff Lead:** Lisa Bigaouette

**Date this document submitted to LCCMR:** June 13, 2024

**Project Title:** Unlocking Minnesota Wilderness for Youth

**Project Budget:** \$705,000

### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Beth Becker

**Organization:** YMCA of the North

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**Web Address:**

### Project Reporting

**Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR:** June 20, 2024

**Reporting Schedule:** June 1 / December 1 of each year.

**Project Completion:** June 30, 2027

**Final Report Due Date:** August 14, 2027

### Legal Information

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2024, Chp. 83, Sec. 2, Subd. 05i

**Appropriation Language:** \$705,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with YMCA of the North to engage underserved youth in hands-on environmental education by expanding Unlock It!, a self-guided, interactive, and nature-based scavenger hunt, to open spaces and campuses across the state.

**Appropriation End Date:** June 30, 2027

## Narrative

**Project Summary:** Our goals are to engage 100,000 underserved youth statewide in environmental education, engaging them in the conservation and preservation of Minnesota wilderness through the experiences in the outdoors.

**Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.**

Research documents extreme disparity in the utilization of public parks and recreation spaces by communities of color and low-income population. In addition, access to outdoor opportunities and general connectedness to nature is heavily related to the positive social, physical and emotional health of children. Studies show that time spent outside is correlated to academic performance, overall physical health and reduction in stress levels. It is imperative that youth, and in turn their families, are aware of their nearby natural resources. With no connection to the natural world, underserved population also have little connection to future conservation or preservation of our wilderness areas, are unaware of career opportunities in nature, or how clean air, water, and land connect to their health and wellbeing.

**What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.**

In public spaces across Minnesota, Unlock It! will provide hands-on environmental learning through an interactive experience. Our project will provide immersive and interactive environmental learning for youth, (and including families, school and community groups, and individuals) throughout the state in rural, suburban and urban areas, increasing the opportunities and engagement of underserved communities. The program is intentionally designed as a step-by-step learning challenge, engaging multiple ages and stages of learners through placed-based learning and team building, teaching conservation, preservation, and environmental sciences.

The learning takes place at YMCA lands, at local parks, open spaces of communities, organizations businesses (e.g. Science Museum), and University of Minnesota lands, that are accessible daily, at no cost, where youth, school groups, homeschoolers and others can access environmental learning through interactive environmental teaching stops along walkways, trails, and bike trails. The interactive educational stops, designed through our partnership with the University of Minnesota are provided by online interactive connection (maps and challenges) for participants. Anyone can access the Unlock It!

Unlock It! makes this learning experience possible for youth, and for school and community groups as access is free, and locations become more accessible in their own communities.

**What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?**

The maps guide participants to find clues and solve puzzles about the area (parks and public lands). The program is FREE. The expected outcomes of the program are: 1) Will engage 100,000 Minnesota youth; 2) Accessibility breaks down barriers for equitable inclusion of underserved communities to better access outdoors, and outdoor education programming; 3) The addition of 36 new maps (12 per year) and communities will be added in Minnesota. (there are currently eleven Unlock It! mapped areas).

## Project Location

**What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?**

Statewide

**What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?**

Statewide

**When will the work impact occur?**

During the Project and In the Future

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Develop new Unlock It! challenges for increased access across Minnesota

**Activity Budget:** \$405,000

**Activity Description:**

We will add 36 new digitally interactive installations over 3 years statewide (12 per year). The projects provide promotion events and involve local communities in partnerships, including outreach to underserved youth. Each site will require its' own digital map challenge to be designed by internal staff and an outside agency, with a digital presence on-line accessible by phone or PC as well as paper (at sites and/or printable). Mapping will also be reportable to Unlock It! for reward messaging. Each map provides a map of a community space (e.g. park, walkway, trail, bike trail) with educational stops and quiz questions that instill environmental awareness and learning. Each location (12 per year) will serve 2,780 annually, over 100,000 per year. This number is based on the usage of current Unlock It! locations. The mapping is used by families, groups, schools, homeschoolers, and community groups. Numbers are tracked online as the digital maps are accessed. The open of each new site provides opportunity for a community introductory event. We invite schools, organizations, youth groups, families and community to attend and participate and in each area we connect with local community leaders and organizations to assist with this outreach.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Outreach materials developed to engage new partners and youth, for 12 locations annually, Year one.	June 30, 2025
12 new Unlock It! maps and map locations developed, Year 2	June 30, 2026
Develop 36 new Unlock It! maps providing environmental learning challenges over 3 years	June 30, 2027
Digital infrastructure (online-connected maps for each site) developed by internal staff and outside agency	June 30, 2027
12 new Unlock It! maps and locations developed in Year 3	June 30, 2027
Digital content for Unlock It! maps (online-connected maps for each site) developed by YMCA staff	June 30, 2027

### Activity 2: YMCA staff will introduce Unlock It! to 36 new communities across Minnesota in three years

**Activity Budget:** \$300,000

**Activity Description:**

YMCA staff will engage communities, community partners and area youth/youth organizations to introduce Unlock It! challenges in each community, 12 annually. Kick-off events will be held at each new site where we will invite community partners, media, and community to be introduced to the Unlock It! map and use. We will provide water and snacks for these Kick-off events. (outreach staff time is \$150,000 included in Personnel)

Over the first year of each new site we will offer guided field trips for youth groups, school groups and others to inform and connect use of the Maps for underserved communities and information about the environment, conservation and preservation within their own area. Costs will include in-state travel for staff, lodging and meals for the sites outside the Twin Cities and printed materials.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
New Unlock It! challenges at 12 sites engage 2,780 youth	June 30, 2025
New Unlock It! challenges at 12 new sites engage 2,780 youth per site	June 30, 2026
New Unlock It! challenges at 12 sites engages 2,780 youth per site	June 30, 2027

Kick off event in each new community, all partners and local includes water/snacks	June 30, 2027
YMCA outreach to area partners to market/establish Unlock It in each new community	June 30, 2027

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Yohannis Shitta	YMCA of the North, Unlock-it	Unlock-It! Project Manager	No

## Dissemination

**Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.**

Unlock It! maps and events will be announced and shared through the website and YMCA media channels. We will promote and acknowledge the ENRTF through the use of the logo and attribution language on project print and electronic publications, signage and maps (which are available online for any user).

## Long-Term Implementation and Funding

**Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?**

We will work to expand Unlock-it installations across the state, where they will remain in place in public spaces, accessible and free. Program outcome evaluation will provide the YMCA a solid basis for leveraging sustainable funding going forward. The YMCA will use the outcome data to engage funders through foundation and corporate grants, annual giving, events and sponsorships to help sustain the project. The Unlock It! program will engage new statewide partners.

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
375 Underserved Youth Learn Minnesota Ecosystems By Canoe	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 05f	\$375,000

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
YMCA Unlock-It! Project Manager		Project Manager, To be Hired			28%	3		\$192,000
YMCA Unlock It Project Staff		Develop written content for Unlock It! Maps (12 per year, 36 over 3 years)			28%	1.2		\$165,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$357,000</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
Contracted Services for map development	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Cat & Tonic contracted for 36 new Un Lock It! maps, 12 per year @ \$30,000/year				3		\$90,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	500 miles/month @.67/mile = \$335 x 12 months = \$4,020 x 3 years = \$12,060 x 2 staff TOTAL: 24,120	Unlock It! staff mileage for travel to new mapping sites to plan, and develop mapping content					\$22,000

	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	2 staff x 5 days average per month @ \$96/day lodging and \$59/day meals = \$1,550/month x 36 months = \$55,800 over 3 years	For mapping coordination with new communities and set-up of events staff will stay near map sites. Lodging and meals for travel made to new sites outside the Twin Cities Metro					\$50,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$72,000</b>
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
	Printing	\$20,000 per year (for 12 new maps, 36 over 3 years) x 3 years = \$60,000	Printing of new maps and locations that will be available at the Kick-Off community events, and each site, for group events. Will also be used for outreach for interested groups, and new communities.					\$60,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>								
		Un-Lock It! Kick-Off community events at 12 communities per year, for each new installation	Community events introducing the open of each new installation sites (12 per year, \$2,500 per community-wide event for water and snacks, \$1000 per event for signage) invite community and local partners together, local news, promoting stewardship and conservation, provide water, snack bars, signage particular to each site, a total of \$42,000 per year.					\$126,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$126,000</b>
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$705,000</b>

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
In-Kind	Marketing and social media will be managed by YMCA in house Communications Team	Marketing and social media will provide digital and printed information about the Unlock It! opportunities, and will also feature ENRTF, LCCMR support	Secured	\$43,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$43,000</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$43,000</b>

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [a3b1b20b-38b.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

Unlock It! mapping challenge youth participants 2 photos, boy and group...

#### *Financial Capacity*

File: [cbbb92b5-226.pdf](#)

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
YMCA Board Resolution	<a href="#">e3dd2a31-c9f.docx</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

#### *Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other*

Title	File
Seth Thompson, U of M, College of Biological Sciences	<a href="#">1705bea9-472.docx</a>
Yohannis Shitta Resume	<a href="#">869a3010-86a.pdf</a>
Unlock It! Science Museum of Minnesota	<a href="#">21bcdeb2-453.pdf</a>
TAX INFO CORRECTED	<a href="#">9db4d217-f64.pdf</a>
TAX INFO CORRECTED	<a href="#">a9fd853e-f7d.pdf</a>

## Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

### *Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage*

We have updated the milestones for the workplan to better explain the program and annual progress.

## Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

**Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?**

N/A

**Do you agree travel expenses must follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?**

Yes, I agree to the Commissioner's Plan.

**Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?**

No

**Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?**

N/A

**Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?**

N/A

**Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?**

No

**Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?**

No

**Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?**

No

**Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?**

Yes

**Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to whom children's services are provided by your organization?**

Yes