Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2026 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2026-367

Staff Lead: Noah Fribley

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: May 28, 2026

Project Title: Minnesota Water Education for Grades K-5

Project Budget: $295,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Andy Chambers

Organization: Science Museum of Minnesota

Office Telephone: (651) 265-9889

Email: achambers@smm.org

Web Address: https://www.smm.org/

Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: June 17, 2026

Reporting Schedule: April 1 / October 1 of each year.

Project Completion: June 30, 2029

Final Report Due Date: August 14, 2029

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2026, Chp. 104, Sec. 2, Subd. 05ee

Appropriation Language: $295,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the Science Museum of Minnesota to provide educational programming on water science and conservation to underserved schools in Minnesota.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2029

Narrative

Project Summary: We are seeking funding to provide Water educational programming to under-served schools in all 87 counties of Minnesota. Schools are looking for programming like this to enhance their student's learning.

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

Students all over the state have never recovered from the COVID-19 Pandemic. Teachers are struggling to repair the deficits in learning, with large gaps in our student's education. Educational experiences that provide hands-on learning opportunities are desired by schools everywhere in Minnesota to help increase learning but the funding to pay for these experiences is rarely available. District budgets have rarely kept up with inflation and the resources available to teachers are extremely limited. The demand for this type of programming has never been higher but schools are struggling to find ways to afford it. Programming that fully engages students and provides connections to what they are learning in the classroom is key to bridging this gap and bringing students up to speed with grade level expectations.

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.

The Science Museum of Minnesota wants to provide aid to our state's teachers and students by bringing our water programming to schools of need in all 87 counties of the state. We regularly bring our programming to schools all over Minnesota and so are experienced in providing experiences at this scale. Our programming is standards aligned, engaging, informational, and memorable. Students who might struggle with more traditional educational experiences are more likely to learn when the information is presented in an impactful way and we have years of experience in providing this type of experience. Our instructors are well trained in coordinating with teachers and finding ways to reach every student in the classroom. These experiences can have an impact on students for years to come and can inspire them well beyond the length of our time with them. This opportunity will be an asset to schools in every county of the state, providing teachers with the additional resources they're seeking and students with the learning experiences they deserve.

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?

Our water programming focuses around the science of water and water conservation. Not only is this programming supportive of Minnesota state science standards, it also focuses on protecting water resources and highlighting actions students can take to conserve the integrity of their local water resources. This type of educational experience not only enhances their in-school learning but also impacts their actions and habits outside of the classroom. It will give them a connection to their local waterways and encourage students to conserve them. This programming will help teach the next generation to preserve our state's resources for years to come.

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: Mobilizing Water Education Across Minnesota

Activity Budget: $50,000

Activity Description:
To expand access to water education programming across all 87 Minnesota counties, this activity includes the purchase of a cargo van to transport materials, equipment, and staff efficiently and reliably. The van will be branded with a custom wrap to promote the program's mission and increase visibility. Key milestones include researching and purchasing the van, completing the van wrap, launching statewide program delivery, and achieving a 25% year-over-year increase in program reach by the end of the grant period. This investment will ensure equitable access to hands-on water education for students in underserved communities, while reducing logistical barriers and enhancing program sustainability.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Research and Lease Van	October 31, 2026
Design and Complete Van Outfitting	November 30, 2026
Launch Statewide Program Delivery	March 31, 2027
Evaluate and Report Increased Reach	June 30, 2028

Activity 2: Expanding Access to Underserved Schools

Activity Budget: $45,000

Activity Description:
This phase of the project will focus on connecting with underserved schools in Minnesota counties that have been historically difficult to reach due to distance from the museum, limited funding, or lack of awareness about our programming. Many schools in rural or remote areas face logistical challenges in accessing our resources. To address this, we will conduct targeted outreach by identifying public schools in these counties, gathering contact information for K-5 educators and principals, and initiating contact through personalized emails and follow-up phone calls. By collaborating with schools to accommodate their academic calendars, we will build a tailored schedule to deliver water education programming directly to their classrooms, ensuring equitable access to engaging, hands-on learning experiences for students in communities that need it most.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Research and Initiate Outreach to Underserved Schools (Year 1)	October 31, 2026
Secure Commitments and Gather Scheduling Details (Year 1)	January 31, 2027
Research and Initiate Outreach to Underserved Schools (Year 2)	September 30, 2027
Secure Commitments and Gather Scheduling Details (Year 2	December 31, 2027

Activity 3: Statewide Water Education Initiative

Activity Budget: $200,000

Activity Description:
Over the two-year grant period, we will deliver water education programming to schools across Minnesota, building

strong relationships with educators and students. With cost barriers removed, schools will have access to our full range of water programming, including instructor-led assemblies and residencies tailored to their needs. Assemblies introduce key concepts, while residencies provide in-depth, hands-on learning experiences. By the end of the grant period, we will compile survey data from participating schools to evaluate the program's impact, identify areas for improvement, and ensure we continue meeting the needs of Minnesota educators and students.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Launch Program Delivery to 25 Schools	February 28, 2027
Reach 50 Schools and Gather Initial Feedback	June 30, 2027
Deliver Programming to 100 Schools	December 31, 2027
Complete Programming and Final Evaluation	June 30, 2028

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.
Our dissemination plan spans three main stages: educator recruitment, stakeholder engagement, and sharing impact evaluation.

Educator recruitment will be through online and in-person outreach, including newsletters sent to SMM's statewide educator email list, notifications through our extended partner network (including the MN STEM Ecosystem and regional service cooperatives), and tabling at major educator conferences such as MEA and MESPA. We will promote these opportunities across all 87 counties, with particular attention to expanding access for schools and educators with the greatest need for resources. Information shared will focus on how the educational programming aligns with state standards and supports student learning. All materials will include acknowledgement of ENRTF funding support.

Wider stakeholder engagement will occur through school partners and their local communities, including local media engagement, press releases, and other targeted outreach to raise public awareness of ENRTF's support for this work and encourage actions that protect, conserve, and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources. The purchased cargo van will feature branding that acknowledges ENRTF funding support and be a visible promotion of that support as we drive across the state. This van will continue to serve as a school program delivery vehicle across Minnesota, supporting the long-term reach and sustainability of these efforts.

Participating educators will be surveyed to assess the program's impact on both their teaching and student learning. Results from this evaluation will be shared on the Science Museum of Minnesota's website and with education partners to broaden understanding of the benefits of informal STEM programs. The core water programming emphasizes the science of water and water conservation, highlighting actions students can take to protect their local water resources. The assemblies address human impacts such as pollution: the K–2 Assembly focuses on proper waste disposal, and the grades 3–5 Assembly challenges students to reflect on how their actions could prevent pollution. These experiences are designed to build lasting connections between students and their local waterways, fostering stewardship beyond the classroom.

Over time, the Science Museum of Minnesota will maintain connections with participating schools and explore opportunities for continued engagement beyond the duration of the project. We will share information about future partnership opportunities and other museum programs that support environmental education and water conservation. Through these efforts, we aim to build on the relationships and momentum established during this project, ensuring that the benefits of ENRTF support continue to reach communities statewide.

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?
After the grant period, the Science Museum of Minnesota will transition water programming to sustainable funding models, reducing reliance on school and district budgets. We will secure ongoing support through state and federal education grants, corporate sponsorships, philanthropic partnerships, and community-based funding initiatives. Program resources and findings will be shared via our educator network and online platforms, ensuring continued access at no cost to schools. By diversifying funding streams, we aim to maintain and expand this impactful

programming, inspiring students to protect and conserve Minnesota's water resources for generations without burdening school budgets.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	$ Amount
Personnel								
Operations Coordinator		The operations coordinator works in collaboration with the manager to schedule programming to schools across the state and manage communication between the schools and the Science Museum Learning and Instruction Specialists who will be delivering programming.			26%	0.4		$22,000
Learning & Instruction Specialist		The learning and instruction specialists will facilitate all in-person school programming and connect with teachers prior to receiving programming to best connect the experience with their current curriculum.			26%	1.5		$105,000
Materials Coordinator		The materials coordinators help support in-person programming by maintaining and packing all materials and equipment.			26%	0.14		$10,000
Program Manager		The managers are responsible for the recruitment of schools that the museum has had difficulty reaching who are historically underserved and lacking in resources. They supervise the specialists and coordinators, and support staff scheduling and project and budget management.			26%	0.48		$30,000
Research and Evaluation Associate		Museum evaluators will design formative and summative instruments that measure project impacts. This team will also help generate reports for the project.			26%	0.3		$20,000
							Sub Total	**$187,000**
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Service Contract	The lease of a cargo van to deliver water programming around the state		X		0.2		$51,000
							Sub Total	**$51,000**
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Water assembly and residency materials (consumables)	Some of our materials are used up over the course of a program or overtime.	X				$16,000

			These materials are vital for demonstrations and hands on activities.					
							Sub Total	**$16,000**
Capital Equipment								
							Sub Total	**-**
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	**-**
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	One SMM instructor traveling to each of the schools per year. Meals and lodging for 135 days of programming over 50 miles from the museum resulting in the need for the instructor to stay overnight. $110/night standard per diem lodging rate. $68/day standard per diem M&I rate. One night for any school outside the Metro region, two for any school beyond 200 miles.	To allow our Learning and Instruction Specialists to travel throughout the state of Minnesota.					$41,000
							Sub Total	**$41,000**
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	**-**
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	**-**
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	**-**
							Grand Total	**$295,000**

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Contracts and Services - TBD	Service Contract	The lease of a cargo van to deliver water programming around the state	This van is necessary for program delivery. Our current fleet of vehicles doesn't give us the capacity to undertake this project as compared to the current amount of schools we are able to reach.
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		Water assembly and residency materials (consumables)	These materials are required in order to meet the learning goals of our program. **Additional Explanation :** They will be used up over the course of the program or will continue to be a part of the array of materials we bring out to schools.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	$ Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	**-**
Non-State				
In-Kind	All indirect project costs are provided in-kind by the Science Museum of Minnesota (federal indirect rate 47.93% on all direct costs)	In-kind contribution of indirects	Pending	$141,394
			Non State Sub Total	**$141,394**
			Funds Total	**$141,394**

Total Project Cost: $436,394

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: b236a51c-869.docx

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Visual of the state of Minnesota before and after ENRTF funding, demonstrating our possible increase in reach, along with a picture of a van and an instructor delivering an assembly....

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
IRS Form 990	60928264-1d7.pdf
Most recent audit report performed by an independent third party in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles	6dd0e5b7-31a.pdf
Evidence of good standing with the Secretary of State	0112bae5-765.pdf
Vehicle Cost Comparison Sheet	2d73a6f6-68a.docx
2026 Ford Transit Quote	2524cfe7-fac.pdf
2026 Ford Transit LEASE	959a91d5-d88.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Changes include the elimination of the Program Specialist as personnel working on this project reflecting the realignment of Science Museum of Minnesota organization restructuring since the proposal was submitted. Project duties were shift to Project Manager and Evaluation Associate personnel. The name of the project was changed to include the word Grades, which makes the intended program recipients (Minnesota students in Grades 3-5) more clear. A dissemination plan was added. Workplan was also changed to reflect leasing a cargo van for project delivery rather than purchasing. Savings from the lease are distributed to more water program delivery, travel, and more resources for updating materials.

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 understand that travel expenses are only approved if they 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 understand the Commissioner's Plan applies.

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

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this project:

N/A

Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements

Yes, I understand