

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2010 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

LCCMR ID: 165-F

Project Title:

Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures (UWCA)

LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:

F. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ \$557,500

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 years, 2010 - 2013

Other Non-State Funds: \$ \$36,000

Summary:

UWCA is a new outdoor education and recreation program on the Mississippi River, complete with guided day trips, overnight camping, and environmental education activities serving 20,000 youth over 3 years.

Name: Greg Lais

Sponsoring Organization: Wilderness Inquiry

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Location:

Region: Metro

County Name: Anoka, Benton, Carver, Chisago, Crow Wing, Dakota, Hennepin, Isanti, Kanabec, McLeod, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Ramsey, Scott, Sherburne, Sibley, Washington, Wright

City / Township:

_____ Knowledge Base	_____ Broad App.	_____ Innovation
_____ Leverage	_____ Outcomes	
_____ Partnerships	_____ Urgency	_____ TOTAL

MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures (UWCA)

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

UWCA is a new environmental education and recreation program on the Mississippi River that will serve more than 20,000 urban youth over a three-year period.

Through a unique partnership between Wilderness Inquiry, the National Park Service, the Mississippi River Fund, and 40 other organizations, we will establish an outdoor education and recreation program on the Mississippi River, complete with guided day trips, overnight camping, and environmental education programs for youth in elementary, middle and high school. Our goal is to encourage outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship as life-long pursuits among disadvantaged urban youth. We also aim to grow the perception of the Mississippi River as a world-class resource for education and understanding about the natural world for Minnesotans.

UWCA is a response to the sharp decline in participation in outdoor education and activities such as canoeing, camping, hunting and fishing by urban youth. UWCA is based on the premise that youth who have meaningful outdoor education experiences are more likely to become engaged and committed environmental stewards, and to invest in Minnesota's outdoor resources as adults.

The Mississippi River traverses the state and is a major source of our nation's history. The river is essential to our diverse economy, and serves as the primary water source for millions of area residents. Minnesota is also home to the only National Park dedicated to the river, the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. Currently, the Mississippi River is under-utilized as a venue for outdoor recreation and for environmental education. Through the UWCA, we intend to change that.

Program Goals

1. Provide accessible, free outdoor education and recreation opportunities for 20,000 of Minnesota's urban youth--who are under-served in outdoor recreation and education pursuits--right in their back yard;
2. Encourage schools, youth organizations, and land management agencies to promote and provide opportunities for urban youth to engage in outdoor education and recreation as life-long pursuits;
3. Create positive outdoor experiences that engender understanding of the vital role of the Mississippi River in our community and our personal lives;
4. Increase commitment of urban youth to invest in Minnesota's outdoor resources over the course of their lives.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: Provide 25 Introductory Canoe Experiences serving 10,000 youth on Mississippi River Budget: \$ 50,000

Youth and families will paddle in 24' Voyageur canoes at community events such as Juneteenth and the Stone Arch Festival to introduce them to water safety, basic canoe training, natural history interpretation, and, for many, experience getting in a boat for the first time.

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. Provide introductory or "gateway" canoe experiences for 10,000 youth (2,000 in 2010, 3,500 in 2011 and 4,500 in 2012). Cost per youth served: \$5.	June 2013

Result 2: Provide 180 Day trips serving 12,500 youth on Mississippi River Budget: \$ 387,500

Youth will paddle in 24' Voyageur canoes to introduce them to the outdoors and gain knowledge and understanding of the Mississippi River. Youth will participate in service learning, river clean-up, and habitat restoration activities, creating a foundation for stewardship.

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. Provide Mississippi River Canoe trips to 12,500 youth (3,500 in 2010, 4,500 each in 2011 and 2012. Cost per youth served: \$30.	June 2013
2. Provide transportation shuttle services for 25 groups (\$500/shuttle * 25 = \$12,500)	June 2013

MAIN PROPOSAL

Result 3: Provide 40 Overnight trips serving 1,000 youth on the Mississippi River Budget: \$75,000

Provide overnight learning experiences for underserved youth from the greater Twin Cities metro area.

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. In cooperation with the DNR, the Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, and private landowners such as Aggregate Industries, identify a network of overnight camping options at appropriate sites throughout the urban corridor.	October 2012
2. Provide 40 Mississippi River overnight canoe trips for 1,000 youth (250 in 2010, and 350 in 2011 and 400 in 2012). Cost per youth served: \$75.	June 2013

Result 4: Evaluate Success of the Program and develop plan for Replication Budget: \$ 45,000

Oversee and evaluate the success of the UWCA experiences in connecting urban youth with the natural world and engendering appreciation of the Mississippi River and Minnesota's other natural resources.

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. Work with researchers at the U of M to develop and implement an evaluation process to measure the success of the program.	October 2010
2. Disseminate findings to appropriate organizations and journals.	June 2013
3. Develop a written model of the program that can be used to replicate the program in other areas around the state.	June 2013

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners:

Wilderness Inquiry (WI); Contact: Greg Lais, Executive Director – For more than 30 years, WI has safely conducted canoe trips for more than 250,000 youth and adults of all abilities and backgrounds. WI will provide the operational support necessary (canoes, paddles, life jackets, trained instructors, safety protocols, etc.) for the UWCA project. WI will also bring partnerships with the Minneapolis and St. Paul Public Schools, and other youth serving organizations.

The Mississippi River Fund; Contact: Katie Nyberg, Executive Director - The Mississippi River Fund will provide private fundraising support, program promotion, public relations, and evaluation coordination. The Fund will also bring in-kind operating dollars to help underwrite the program.

The National Park Service (NPS); Contact: Paul Labovitz, Superintendent - NPS will provide education and service learning content and Park Rangers on workshops, day, and overnight trips. Additionally, the park will develop a special Junior Ranger component to the canoe route. NPS will broker use agreements to facilitate use of the River with other land management agencies. NPS will provide significant in-kind personnel and funding to the project.

B. Timeline Requirements: We are requesting three years of program funding, beginning in the summer of 2010. The grant period allows for a more informative evaluation process that includes front-end and follow up data collection from program participants.

C. Long-Term Strategy: Our goal is to build public awareness, commitment, and enthusiasm for the UWCA so that it will be sustained long after the initial investment of the LCCMR. We will seek to establish long-term funding options from foundations, corporations, individuals, events, and the Federal Government (National Park Service). By serving 10,000 to 15,000 youth per year, we aim to create a new generation of outdoor enthusiasts who understand and use canoe and boating routes and waterways throughout the State of MN.

Project Budget

IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET (3 years)

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel:	
UWCA Program Coordinator (50% FTE)	\$ 45,000
Program Activities:	
25 Introductory canoe experiences serving 10,000 youth (\$5/youth served)	\$ 50,000
180 Mississippi River day trips serving 12,500 youth (\$30/youth served)	\$ 375,000
40 Overnight camping trips serving 1,000 youth (\$75/youth served)	\$ 75,000
Transportation: Shuttle service for 25 youth groups	\$ 12,500
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$ 557,500

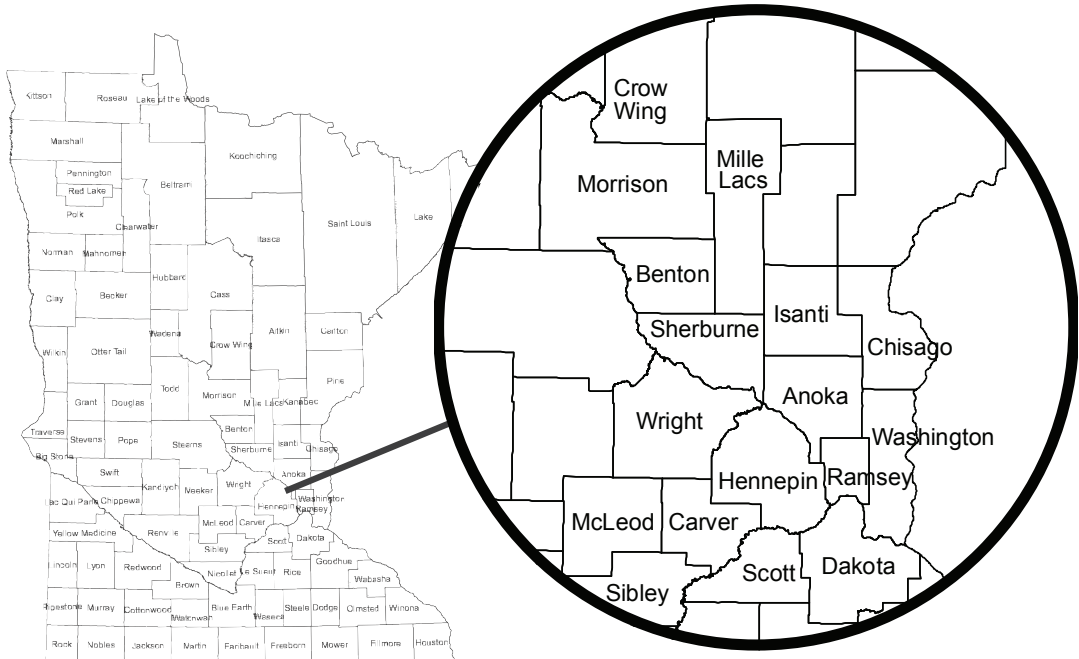
V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Wilderness Inquiry In-kind Services During Project Period*:		
Personnel:		
Program Direction: Exec Director, Finance Director, Assoc Director, Program Dir	\$ 90,000	
Program Coordinator (50% FTE)	\$ 45,000	
Benefits	\$ 39,644	
Insurance	\$ 47,495	
Printing, Postage, and Internet (monthly phone and internet fees for program manager, printing, and postage costs for pre and post trip materials, and website design).	\$ 24,535	
TOTAL WILDERNESS INQUIRY IN-KIND	\$ 246,674	
National Park Service In-kind Services During Project Period:		
Personnel:		
Program Director	\$ 24,014	
Rangers to provide environmental ed curricula and interpretation	\$ 58,457	
Program Supplies (curricula and materials for interpretive activities)	\$ 5,550	
TOTAL NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IN-KIND	\$ 88,021	
Mississippi River Fund In-kind Services During Project Period:		
Personnel:		
Executive Director	\$ 15,000	
Grants to Wilderness Inquiry and the National Park Service	\$ 36,000	<i>pending</i>
TOTAL MISSISSIPPI RIVER FUND IN-KIND	\$ 51,000	
TOTAL ALL IN-KIND	\$ 385,695	

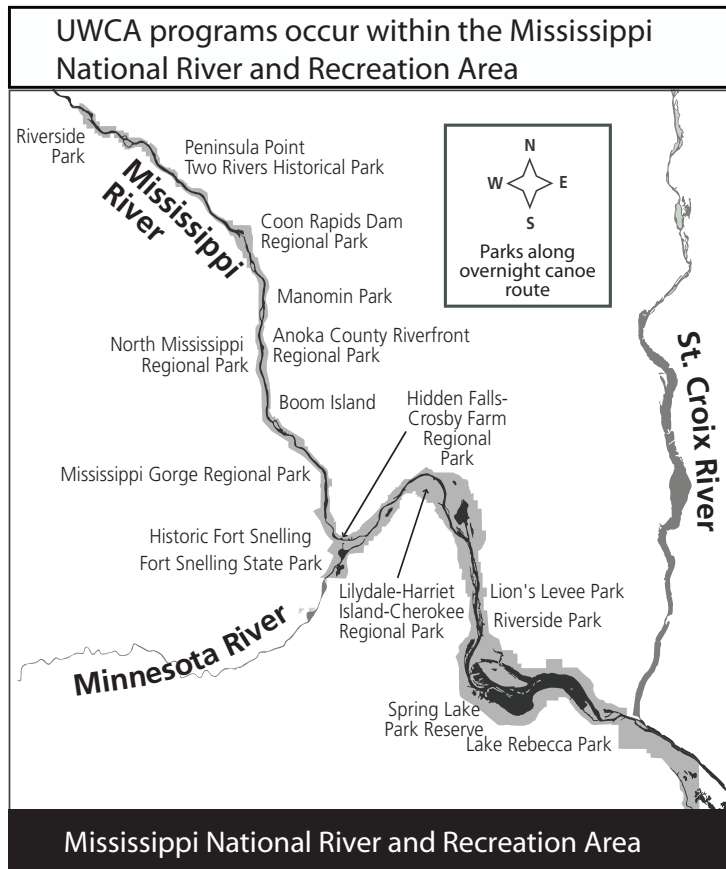
* We plan to solicit corporate, foundation, and individual donors to support these line items

Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures (UWCA)

Vision: To serve 10,000 youth annually on the Mississippi River



Counties Served by the UWCA Program



Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description

Greg Lais, Project Manager

Greg Lais is the Founder and Executive Director of Wilderness Inquiry (WI), the oldest and most extensive outdoor education and travel program in the world for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Since 1978, WI has served more than 250,000 people on wilderness trips, including thousands of people with disabilities such as quadriplegia, Muscular Dystrophy, Multiple Sclerosis or traumatic brain injury.

An expert in design and implementation of integrated outdoor programs, Mr. Lais has developed outdoor policies, written staff training manuals, adapted outdoor curriculum, developed adapted equipment and published several articles on integrated programming.

Under the direction of Mr. Lais, Wilderness Inquiry has received awards from the National Therapeutic Recreation Association, Minnesota State Council on Disability Distinguished Service Award (twice), ARC of Minnesota and many others. In March 2005, WI received the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) Community Building Award recognizing Inquiry's WI's leadership in helping to initiate change in communities and organizations that result in persons with disabilities being increasingly valued and included as community members. WI is honored to receive the American Association on Mental Retardation Full Community Inclusion Award.

Mr. Lais was the project manager for an LCCMR funded project in the 1995-96 biennium.

Wilderness Inquiry

A non-profit organization based in the Twin Cities, WI has provided opportunities for outdoor recreation for some of our most underserved and at-risk populations since 1978. WI serves over 10,000 people annually on canoe, kayak, horsepack, dogsled and hiking trips throughout North America, including 17 different units of the National Park Service. WI has 10 full-time and 60 part-time staff.

WI maintains a fleet of fifteen, 24-foot Voyageur canoes, 20 canoe trailers and seven, 15-passenger vans in a warehouse at its headquarters in Dinkytown near the University of Minnesota—10 minutes away from the landing at East River Flats. These canoes are an important component of the UWCA because they provide a significant margin of safety over smaller tandem canoes. They are very stable, capable of withstanding very large waves and allow for one certified staff member to oversee eight youth in each canoe. WI also has hundreds of personal floatation devices (PFD's), paddles, and assorted safety and support gear, such as VHF radios, throw ropes, etc. This gear is available to the UWCA program for