

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

LCCMR ID: 174-F

Project Title:

Climate Master Volunteers: Reducing Minnesota's Greenhouse Gas Emissions

LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:

F. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ \$386,000

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ \$0

Summary:

Minnesota Climate Masters is a sustainable volunteer-based program that teaches adults climate science, provides knowledge/skills to reduce personal carbon footprints, and develops abilities to assist neighbors in reducing their footprints.

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Sponsoring Organization: U of MN

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Location:

Region: Statewide

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

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

MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: Climate Master Volunteers: Reducing Minnesota's Greenhouse Gas Emissions

I. PROJECT STATEMENT: MN Climate Masters will be a volunteer program that teaches adults about climate science, provides them with the knowledge and skills to reduce their personal greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and develops their abilities to assist friends and neighbors in reducing personal carbon footprints. The mission of the program will be to promote awareness, understanding, and stewardship of MN's environment by developing a corps of well-informed citizens dedicated to climate science education and service within their communities.

According to the Governor's Climate Change Advisory Group, cutting Minnesota's GHG emissions will require strategic changes by citizens in energy, transportation and land use.¹ Unfortunately, few non-technical, practical resources exist to help Minnesotans understand and enact these changes. The MN Climate Masters program will remedy this situation. Specifically, the program will develop curriculum materials, a training program, a website, and a network of volunteer support to educate Minnesotans on the essential principles of climate science, and low-cost ways to reduce emissions from heating, cooling, transportation, and waste disposal.

The program will be sponsored by the MN Master Naturalist Program and will be developed with aid of the University of Oregon Climate Leadership Initiative. The Initiative has been particularly successful in their work. In their first year, 2007, they had 50 volunteers complete 600 hours of GHG reduction service, reaching 1200 people through 85 household "climate consultations". The most active program participants reduced their GHG emissions by an average of over two tons per year. Based on the success of the three year-old Minnesota Master Naturalist program, we expect that Minnesota Climate Masters will train approximately 250 MN volunteers in its first three years who will reach more than 3500 people in over 150 households.

Development of MN Climate Masters will involve collaboration between MN Master Naturalist, UMN Extension, MN DNR, and the Oregon Climate Leadership Initiative. The MN Master Naturalist program itself is a collaboration between UMN Extension and the DNR. A program team with members from the different agencies will train instructors to deliver the program statewide. MN Climate Masters will target adult participants in existing volunteer programs including many of the programs administered by MPCA, MN DNR, and MN Master Naturalist. Fees charged for the volunteer training will cover program costs once the grant ends.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: Develop and refine Minnesota Climate Master curriculum, workshop model, instructor training, and volunteer support network. Budget: \$ 157,391. The program team will develop and pilot curriculum materials, activities, and video clips for a 20-hour volunteer training workshop. They will develop a program website that will be both informational for the general public and provide support and management for the volunteers. An outside evaluator will measure participant gains/satisfaction to guide refinement of the workshop & materials.

Deliverable

1. Curriculum, activities and video clips for 20-hour volunteer training.

Completion Date

Oct 2010

¹ MCCAG. (2008). *Minnesota Climate Change Advisory Group Final Report: A Report to the Minnesota Legislature*. Retrieved September 2008 from <http://www.mnclimatechange.us/MCCAG.cfm>.

- 2. Website with information on climate science for public and where volunteers register for training; log service; & find volunteer opportunities. Dec 2010
- 3. Evaluation to improve & refine materials based on three pilot classes. July 2011

Result 2: Implement program statewide through instructor and volunteer workshops.

Budget: \$ 142,894. Program team members will develop & pilot instructor-training workshops for teachers, environmental educators, and science professionals. Evaluation will guide training refinements. Team members will then train 50 instructors statewide (1 Twin Cities & 4 Greater MN trainings), and support them in training approximately 250 volunteers over two years.

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. Curriculum and activities for one-day instructor training.	Oct 2011
2. Conduct 2 pilot workshops for 20 education & science professionals.	July 2012
3. Evaluate, refine & complete all volunteer & instructor training materials.	July 2012
3. Conduct workshops for approximately 30 additional instructors.	November 2012
4. Instructors conduct workshops for approximately 250 volunteers.	April 2013

Result 3: Minnesota Climate Masters volunteers complete approximately 3000 service hours, involving 3500 citizens, and reducing GHG emissions by ~ 100 tons annually.

Budget: \$ 85,715. Program coordinator will work with local agencies, volunteer programs and community organizations to support Climate Master Volunteers in completing a required 10 hours or more of community service annually, including 150+ home “climate consultations.”

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. Work with agencies and organizations to develop community volunteer opportunities. Provide volunteers with ongoing opportunities for service.	Oct 2012
2. Evaluation to document GHG reduction impacts of all (projected 3600) volunteer service hours.	July 2013

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Nathan Meyer and Rob Blair, University of Minnesota Extension will co-manage the project. **Dawn Flinn, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources** will coordinate activities with DNR educational activities & volunteer programs. **Viviane Simon-Brown, Oregon State University** will support adapting the Oregon Initiative to Minnesota.

B. Timeline Requirements

The project will be developed over 3 years. Based on experience with MN Master Naturalist, both volunteer and instructor training are most successful spring-fall. Year One will focus on program development, piloting, & evaluation of the volunteer training. Year Two will focus on refining the volunteer training as well as on developing, piloting, and evaluating the instructor training. Year Three will focus on statewide volunteer training, support, and community service.

C. Long-Term Strategy

LCCMR funds will support the development of a sustainable, fee-based, climate-science volunteer program. The long-term strategy is to use fees to continue volunteer & instructor training for at least five years, and to support trained volunteers in continuing education and service. The focus of service will respond to community-level need and benchmarks proposed in the forthcoming 2009 Statewide Comprehensive Climate Education Strategy from MPCA.

Project Budget

IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET (3 years)

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Personnel:	
Principal Investigator Robert Blair 10% FTE of \$96,971.94 for 3 project years. Leadership for project, committees and training design.	\$ 42,066
Co-investigator Nathan Meyer 15% FTE of \$49,833.16 for three project years. Staff and committee management for completion of project results.	\$ 32,427
Community Program Assoc. 75% FTE of \$33,280 for three project years. Day-to-day operation of the program, teaching classes, cultivating volunteer support.	\$ 112,128
Program Support and Administration 10% FTE of \$36,774 for three project years. Program support such as managing participant registration, curriculum copies, phone inquiries, etc.	\$ 16,517
Contracts:	
Website development in project years 1 & 2.	\$ 10,000
Evaluation of volunteer & instructor training, and volunteer service impacts.	\$ 11,000
Design and Editing of curriculum and instructor training materials.	\$ 15,000
Production of high quality climate science video clips/animations for training.	\$ 60,000
Honoraria for 6 Steering Committee Members (\$200/meeting for 4 meetings).	\$ 4,800
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	
Promotion materials like posters, brochures, canvas bags, lapel pins, etc. in project years 1 & 2.	\$ 5,500
Curriculum printing for volunteer trainings.	\$ 5,000
Instructor Handbook printing.	\$ 2,250
Kill-A-Watt meters (\$40) for 250 volunteer participants use in climate consultations/personal energy audits.	\$ 10,000
Travel/Lodging:	
Mileage for 4 member interagency project team to participate in 12 quarterly two-day meetings over 3 project years.	\$ 2,472
Project team member lodging & food for 12 overnights over 3 project years	\$ 8,604
Mileage for 4 instructors to teach 3 statewide pilot volunteer training classes that each include 5 sessions in project year 1.	\$ 8,000
Lodging/Food for 40 overnights in year 1 for 4 instructors to deliver evening volunteer training classes.	\$ 7,560
Mileage for 2 instructors to teach 6 statewide one-day instructor training classes in project years 2 & 3.	\$ 4,950
Lodging food for 12 overnights for 2 instructors for instructor training classes.	\$ 2,268
Mileage for 6 member stakeholder steering committee to meet 4 times over 3 project years. NOTE one member will fly in from Oregon Climate Initiative.	\$ 7,500
Lodging/Food for 6 member steering committee meetings.	\$ 5,472
Mileage for Community Program Assoc. to cultivate community partnerships for volunteer support and service in years 2 & 3.	\$ 2,750
Lodging/Food for Community Program Assoc. to spend 6 two-day meetings in Greater MN to cultivate community partnerships.	\$ 2,736
Additional Budget Items:	
Approximately 50 Scholarships to subsidize registration costs (est. \$125-150) for up to 20% of participants who cannot afford them.	\$ 7,000
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$ 386,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Funding History: NSF Funding for Model Minnesota Master Naturalist Program Development.	\$ 1,349,491	Received

Project Manager Qualifications:

Dr. Rob Blair is an Associate Professor of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology in the College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Science at the University of Minnesota.

He initiated the Minnesota Master Naturalist program in 2005 with a grant from the National Science Foundation Informal Science Education Program. Currently, he coordinates efforts of four Extension educators working on the project and two administrative assistants. Amy Rager, Extension Educator at Morris, is the Project Director. She handles the everyday functioning of the program and direct communication with instructors and volunteers. Blair oversees the development of all curriculum material, including writing most of the main text. He manages the budgets for the program. He also coordinates efforts with the program's main partner – MN DNR and Dawn Flinn, Education Coordinator for the DNR.

His role with Minnesota Climate Masters will be similar. Nate Meyer, Extension Educator at Cloquet, will be the project director. He will handle the day-to-day functioning of the program and direct contact with instructors and volunteers. Blair will oversee all curriculum development, budgets, training and evaluation. Coordination with partners – MNDNR & the Oregon Initiative – and advisement from MPCA will be the responsibility of both Blair and Meyer.

Minnesota Climate Masters will be a companion program to Minnesota Master Naturalist. Its audience will be Minnesota Master Naturalists, volunteers who participate in programs sponsored by MPCA and MNDNR, and people who have not yet volunteered with environmentally-based programs.

Organization Description:

University of Minnesota Extension takes the latest research from the University labs into people's lives - where they live, work and play. Extension staff listen to and collaborate with individuals, organizations and communities in order to discover, develop and deliver research-based education and information to address issues that are important to Minnesota - safe water, healthy and sustainable food, renewable energy, limited family finances, conservation of Minnesota's natural resources, etc.

The Minnesota Master Naturalist Program is a model collaboration between the University of Minnesota Extension and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Minnesota Master Naturalist is a volunteer program that teaches adults about Minnesota's natural resources, empowers them to educate others, and provides them opportunities to do conservation projects. The mission of the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program is to promote awareness, understanding, and stewardship of Minnesota's natural environment by developing a corps of well-informed citizens dedicated to conservation education and service within their communities.

The Minnesota Master Naturalist program has been resoundingly successful. Since the Fall of 2005, 100 professional naturalists have become trained Master Naturalist Instructors and they have taught classes that have graduated 461 volunteers. In 2008 alone, these volunteers provided 2,538 hours of work on stewardship projects, 3,160 hours on interpretive activities that reached more than a million people, 2,590 hours on citizen-science monitoring, and 7,027 hours of program support at various nature centers for a total of 15,315 hours of volunteer effort. According to IndependentSector.org, this volunteer time is valued at \$19.51 per hour for a total contribution of \$298,796 to the state's economy. From 2005 through 2008, the volunteers have donated over 44,655 hours worth more than \$863,860.

