

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

LCCMR ID: 190-F

Project Title:

Innovative Model for Outdoor Education in Grades 7-12

LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:

F. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ \$300,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 2 years, 2010 - 2012

Other Non-State Funds: \$ \$0

Summary:

Inovative approach to train and support 7-12 grade teachers so their students can achieve academic standards by using the outdoors as a context for learning and outdoor skill-building.

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Sponsoring Organization: DNR

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Location:

Region: Statewide

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

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

PROJECT TITLE: New model for outdoor education in grades 7-12

PROJECT STATEMENT: This project will fund two key recommendations identified by teachers and other citizens on an Outdoor Education Advisory Committee that submitted a report to the State Legislature in 2009 titled: *Outdoor Education Legislative Report – 2009*. It is the logical next step to increase the quantity and quality of outdoor education experiences provided to secondary students in Minnesota schools. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) provided oversight and support to the citizen advisory workgroup that made recommendations to the Legislature. The two agencies have collaborated on this proposal.

This project, which aims to improve academic achievement in students in grade 7-12 by using the outdoors as a context for learning, has the companion goal of developing outdoor skills in students. This approach addresses current academic realities while also having a potential positive influence on outdoor recreation participation. Utilizing new approaches, the project will do two things within all regions of the state. One, it will provide professional development for secondary education teachers through a train-the-trainer model. Two, it will provide incentives for innovative outdoor education models through a grants program.

This project is a direct response to state and national trends that show declining participation in outdoor recreation. It also addresses issues identified in the previously mentioned outdoor education report to the Legislature. It is designed to address three strategic themes that the citizen outdoor education advisory committee deemed important: increasing the awareness and benefits of outdoor education, garnering resources to implement outdoor education, and successfully addressing academic relevance issues at the classroom level.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: Professional development for secondary education teachers delivered regionally through a “train-the-trainer” model. \$100,000

The Minnesota Department of Education will hire one full-time unclassified position (see budget item-\$150,000) to coordinate the efficient use of regional and state resources in the design and implementation of professional development and program grants that use an outdoor education approach. The purpose of the professional development component is to equip teachers with the knowledge, skills and resources necessary to help students: 1) Master state and local academic standards through an outdoor education approach; and 2) Develop their outdoor skills and knowledge. Under the coordinator’s leadership, a statewide system of professional development will be created using a “train-the trainer” model. A core “trainers” team will be formed consisting of: 1) Licensed teachers from multiple disciplines including, but not limited to, science, physical education, social studies and mathematics who possess interest and/or knowledge in outdoor education; 2) Providers of outdoor education and environmental education such as environmental learning centers, outdoor industry partners, and members of conservation and sporting organizations with expertise in certain facets of outdoor recreation.

The core team will plan professional development activities (training modules) and develop resources that can be used in various regions of the state. Members of the core team will train participants who will become regional trainers. Regional trainers will train middle school and high school teachers in their respective regions with preference given to interdisciplinary school teams of teachers. The regional trainers will continue to provide follow-up and ongoing technical assistance for teachers in their region for the duration of the grant period.

Deliverable completion dates:

1. Establishment of an Outdoor Education coordinator and core “trainers” team (late fall 2010)
2. Create plans for structure, content and scope of training modules (winter 2010)
3. Develop plans for delivery of training using the modules (spring 2011)
4. Create training modules and other resources (June 2011)
5. Train at least 5 regional trainers (summer-fall 2011)
6. Regional trainers train at least 25 middle and high school teachers in 5 regions who collectively serve 750 or more students.

Result 2: Provide incentives for innovative outdoor education models through mini-grants. \$50,000

Middle schools, high schools and other non-profit providers of outdoor education will be invited to submit proposals for the design and implementation of innovative outdoor education programs to bolster student achievement in middle school or high school science, physical education, social studies and/or mathematics. Funding priority will be given to programs that target traditionally underachieving or at-risk student populations. A small number of programs (5-10) will receive grants ranging from \$3,000 to \$10,000 apiece.

Deliverable completion dates:

1. Design RFP that includes a grant evaluation component (fall 2010)
2. Announce grant RFP (winter 2010)
3. Select 5-10 proposals to be funded \$3,000 – \$10,000 per proposal (late winter 2010).
Funded proposals will reach at least 750 students, 200 or more of whom are considered to be underachieving or at risk of underachieving
4. Announce 5-10 proposals to be funded (spring 2011)
5. Implement grant programs (July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012)
6. Monitor and evaluate grant programs (July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012)
7. Write report of staff development and grant program activities, results and recommendations for activities that should continue beyond LCCMR grant. (June 2012)

PROJECT STRATEGY**Project Team/Partners**

This project will be co-led by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Minnesota Department of Education. C.B. Bylander of the DNR and Dr. Beth Aune of MDE will provide initial oversight. The coordinator will utilize technical assistance from citizen workgroup members, school districts, and the environmental, conservation and recreation community.

Timeline requirements

This project will be carried out over a two-year period. Sequentially, it will require the hiring of a project leader, the development of a train-the-trainer model, and the delivery of a grants program to support innovative ways to teach academics, build outdoor skills and develop a conservation ethic among Minnesota’s youth.

Long-term strategy

This proposal represents a unique opportunity for the DNR and MDE to plumb the depths of interest, opportunity and effectiveness in the teaching of outdoor education in grades 7-12. The lessons learned from this pilot project would be the basis for a future LCCMR grant to further the goals of environmental and conservation education, academic achievement and sustaining Minnesota tradition of active outdoor recreation participation, which important to our economy.

Project Budget

IV. TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST - 2 YEARS

BUDGET ITEM <i>(See list of Eligible & Non-Eligible Costs, p. 13)</i>	AMOUNT
Personnel	
One full-time unclassified outdoor education coordinator to work at Minnesota Department of Education (74 percent salary; 26 percent fringe)	\$150,00
Contracts: Contracts with topic experts to develop training modules to train at least five regional trainers to train at least 25 middle and high school teachers	\$90,000
Grants: Provide incentives for innovative outdoor education models through five to 10 grants ranging from \$3,000 to \$10,000.	\$50,00
Travel: In-state regional travel to train regional trainers in this train-the-trainer approach and to assist in delivery of training, monitoring and evaluation of program.	\$10,000
Additional Budget Items: <i>In this column, list any additional budget items that do not fit above categories. List by item(s) or item type(s) and explain how number was reached.</i>	\$ -
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$ -
	\$ -

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	
Funding history: This is a brand new effort. It does not have a funding history.	
	\$ -
	\$ -
	\$ -

Project Manager Description

C.B. Bylander is the Outreach Chief for the Fish and Wildlife Division of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

A 22-year agency employee, he manages the division's outreach and communications programs, including the recruitment and retention of hunters and anglers. Previously, he has served as the agency's Information and Education Bureau chief and as the regional director for central Minnesota.

In 2008, Bylander led the DNR's involvement in creating an outdoor education citizen advisory committee as required by state legislation. That committee made recommendations to the State Legislature in January of 2009 on how best to implement outdoor education into the state's grades 7-12 education system.

The Minnesota DNR, which works with the people of Minnesota to manage and conserve natural resources, has identified outdoor recreation participation as a priority. This proposal speaks to the agency's commitment to identifying new and innovative ways to use Minnesota's out of doors for the teaching of conservation-environmental education and hands-on skill- building (canoeing, archery, camp craft, etc) while also achieving academic standards.

