

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

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**LCCMR ID: 193-F**

**Project Title:**

Urban Forestry Outdoor Education

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**LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:**

F. Environmental Education

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**Total Project Budget: \$** \$95,000

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

**Other Non-State Funds: \$** \$400,000

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**Summary:**

At Silverwood Park and other forests, Three Rivers Park District will develop an urban forestry curriculum, including outdoor exhibits; deliver school-age and public programs; and provide training for professional educators.

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**Name:** Denis Hahn

**Sponsoring Organization:** Three Rivers Park District

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**Location:**

**Region:** Metro

**County Name:** Ramsey

**City / Township:** Village of St. Anthony

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

## I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Understanding forests, their science, and their management helps Minnesotans decide how to steward these valuable resources in the future. With a forest site accessible to a large urban population, and staff experienced in education on ecology and sustainability, Three Rivers Park District is well prepared to provide children and adults of all abilities with an opportunity to learn about forests while immersed in an outdoor forest classroom, both on the forest floor and in the canopy. This type and depth of forest education is unique in the metropolitan area, where this educational resource will be accessible to and enhance environmental literacy of people of diverse ages, ethnicities, and abilities.

Three Rivers Park District will install interpretive exhibits and learning stations in an outdoor setting, potentially in an accessible treehouse classroom. A few educators in other states are pioneering accessible treehouses utilized as outdoor interpretive space. Three Rivers Park District's new Silverwood Park – located so close to diverse populations - provides an ideal location to pilot this outdoor education strategy in Minnesota.

This **Urban Forestry Outdoor Education** project will involve the following:

- Designing **urban forestry interpretive and interactive exhibits** for school-age and general public audiences, to install in an outdoor setting, either in the outdoor accessible treehouse classroom or alternatively, in a forest setting.
- Developing and providing **urban forestry programs** for school-age and public audiences, both self-directed and naturalist-led.
- Developing and offering **urban forestry educator training workshops** for school teachers, professional naturalists, professional foresters, and park rangers.

Highlighting global climate change and invasive species impacts on our forests, urban and rural, will be memorable in this forest learning environment. The urban location provides special opportunities to highlight the cause and effect between human attitudes and behavior and the environment; evaluation of alternative responses to environmental issues; and understanding the effects of multiple uses of the environment.

With the only forest-focused, outdoor education site in the region, Three Rivers Park District will create an urban environmental education destination serving 30,000 people annually in self-guided program activities, with active programs serving 10,000 school-age children per year and 3,000 general public audience visits per year. The on-site professional training will multiply the benefits of this Urban Forestry Outdoor Education and extend its reach far beyond this site alone. When the accessible treehouse potential is realized at this site, the program reach will be even greater.

## II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

### **Result 1: Design and Install Urban Forest Interactive Interpretive Exhibits Budget: \$55,000**

Three Rivers Park District will design and install interpretive exhibits in the Outdoor Classroom or other outdoor forest setting to provide hands-on interactive learning experiences related to the ecology and human benefits of the urban forest. Forestry concepts will include hydrology, nutrient cycles, erosion protection, forest management, forest succession, inventory methodology, species identification and forest terminology. Ecological concepts will include native and non-native forest species, mammals and birds of the urban forest, watershed relationships, and environmental benefits.

#### **Deliverable:**

Interpretive exhibits designed and installed.

#### **Completion Date**

**March 2011**

### **Result 2: Develop Urban Forest Education Curriculum and Public Programs Budget: \$20,000**

Three Rivers Park District education staff, with consultants, will develop school-age urban forest curriculum meeting Minnesota State Education Standards and helping achieve "Environmental Education Outcome Goals for Minnesota" described in the [Minnesota Greenprint](#). Three Rivers Park District staff will provide these programs for metro area students at Silverwood, especially students

from the many schools within walking distance of the site, utilizing the exhibits either in the Urban Forest Outdoor Classroom space or in the forest. Piloted by St. Anthony Public Schools, the program will cover topics including forest management, native and non-native forest species, mammals and birds of the urban forest, watershed relationships, environmental benefits, and global climate change. To estimate people served, Three Rivers Park District reviewed participation at similar programs at other new Three Rivers Park District environmental education facilities. Estimates for this site: 30,000 people annually in self-guided program activities, with active programs serving 10,000 school-age children per year and 3,000 general public audience visits per year.

**Deliverable:**

Develop and deliver curriculum

**Completion Date**

**Through June 2012**

**Result 3: Develop Urban Forest Professional Educators Training Program Budget: \$20,000**

After Three Rivers Park District staff and a professional training consultant firm develop training manuals, Three Rivers Park District will implement urban forestry professional enrichment workshops for school teachers, foresters, naturalists, and other outdoor educators to further the reach of this project's environmental education efforts. The on-site professional training will extend the benefits of this Urban Forestry Outdoor Education far beyond this site.

**Deliverable:**

Training manual and workshops

**Completion Date**

**June 2012**

### **III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

#### **A. Project Team/Partners**

**1. Three Rivers Park District:**

- a. Project Manager, Denis Hahn:** project management, team work coordination, interpretive concept direction
- b. Natural Resource Management Team: John Barten, Paul Kortebein, Randy Lehr, Larry Gillette:** natural resource expertise, particularly in forestry.
- c. Recreation and Education staff:** interpretive concept direction, curriculum development, program delivery.

**2. Consultants and contractors:** firms that specialize in interpretive exhibit design, curriculum development, and professional educator training; Three Rivers Park District will select firms through a public Request For Proposal process.

#### **B. Timeline Requirements**

In two years, July 2010 – June 2012, Three Rivers Park District can design and complete education exhibits, training manual, and curricula, and provide programs for key audiences.

#### **C. Long-Term Strategy**

Three Rivers Park District will continue to nurture education programs at Silverwood Regional Park to serve its mission: to promote environmental stewardship through recreation and education in a natural resources-based park system. This Urban Forestry Outdoor Education initiative will be augmented by a Forest Restoration program, through hands-on projects over a large area of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Three Rivers Park District will evaluate and assess program success over a five-year period by conducting surveys and gathering evaluations from school group and public program participants as well as from educator participants in urban forestry professional enrichment workshops. The urban forest school age curriculum program will be expanded by offering this program to two or three public school districts and private schools per year through the current school partners that utilize the Three Rivers Park District nature centers, educational farm, and history sites.

## Urban Forestry Outdoor Education Project Project Budget

### IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET (Two years)

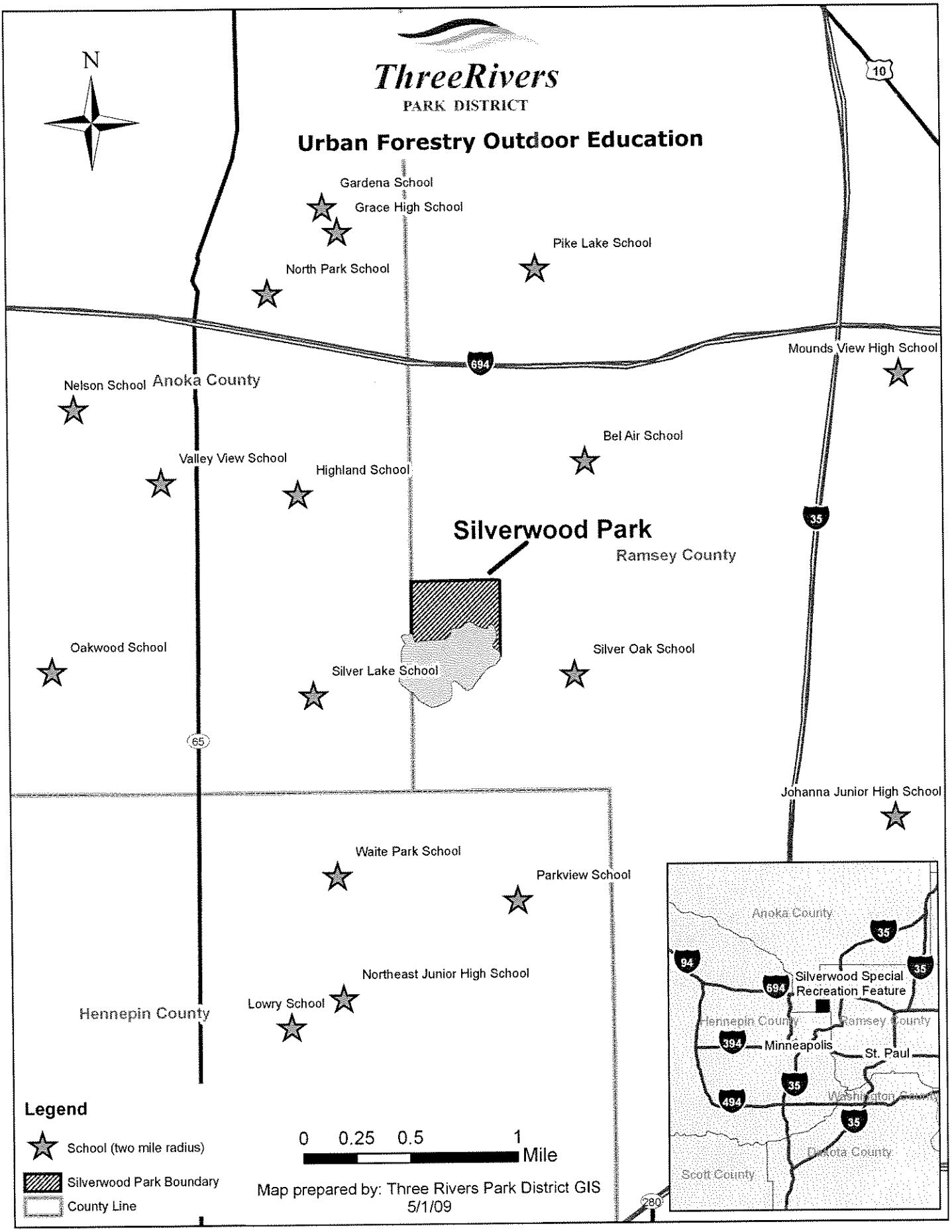
<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	
<b>Contracts:</b>		
Exhibit Design Firm: Outdoor Classroom - Interpretive Exhibit Design, Manufacture and Installation - to be selected through public RFP process	\$50,000	
Interpretive Program Development Firm: School-based urban forestry curriculum development and public program development	\$20,000	
Interpretive Program Development Firm: Development and initial provision of educator training workshops on urban forestry for school teachers, professional naturalists, professional foresters, and park rangers - to be selected through public RFP process	\$20,000	
Forestry Equipment for Educational Programs	\$5,000	
<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR</b>	\$ 95,000	

### V. OTHER FUNDS

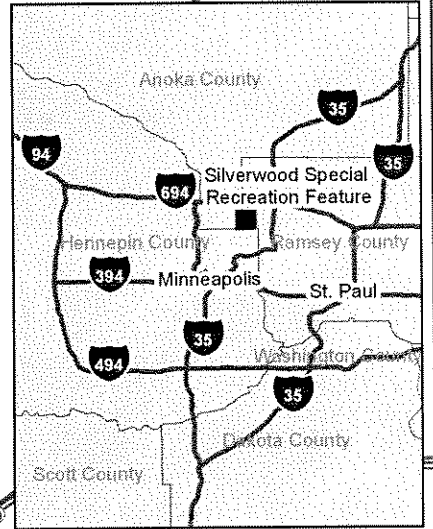
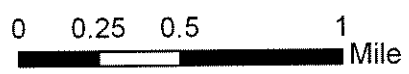
<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
<b>Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>		
Three Rivers Park District, non-state funds (private)	\$400,000	<i>Pending</i>
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period:</b>		
Three Rivers Park District: Natural Resource Management staff, Education and Recreation staff, and Administrative support.	\$46,000	<i>Committed</i>
<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET OTHER FUNDS</b>	\$446,000	
<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET</b>	\$ 541,000	

*ThreeRivers*  
PARK DISTRICT

**Urban Forestry Outdoor Education**



- Legend**
- ★ School (two mile radius)
  - ▨ Silverwood Park Boundary
  - County Line



**Project Manager Qualifications:****Denis Hahn:**

Denis has extensive experience managing many outdoor education curriculum development and interpretive exhibit projects. He has served as Director of Educational Programs for four years at an urban nature center in West St. Paul, Minnesota, and has been a Senior Manager of Outdoor Education for five years with Three Rivers Park District. Recently appointed to Director of Outdoor Education, Denis oversees the facility and program operations of five nature centers, an educational farm, an historic village, and an overnight outdoor education residential camp for Three Rivers Park District. He has been project lead for the development of outdoor interpretive exhibits at Gale Woods Farm and Lake Minnetonka Regional Park both in Minnetrista, Minnesota. For more than 30 years, Denis has developed outdoor education program curriculum for schools as well as related programs and special events for the public. He has been a Project Learning Tree instructor for professional enrichment programs for teachers and other outdoor educators.

**Organizational Description:**

Three Rivers Park District is a natural resources-based park system located in the suburban Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area of Minnesota that manages nearly 27,000 acres of park reserves, regional parks, regional trails and special-use facilities. As an independent, special park district established by the Minnesota Legislature in 1957, the Park District is charged with the responsibilities of acquisition, development and maintenance of large park reserves, regional parks and regional trails for the benefit and use of the citizens of the metropolitan area and the State of Minnesota. Three Rivers Park District is governed by an independent, seven-member Board of Commissioners. Five members of the Board are elected from districts in suburban Hennepin County, and two members are appointed by the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners. Each of the Park District's facilities is located within watersheds that flow into three rivers: the **Mississippi, Minnesota and Crow**.

The mission of Three Rivers Park District is to promote environmental stewardship through recreation and education in a natural resources-based park system. Three Rivers' policy for planning and management of natural resources has distinguished it from other park and recreation agencies in Minnesota. The policy specifies that no more than 20 percent of a park reserve may be developed for active use, and that at least 80 percent of a park reserve shall be restored to and retained in a natural state. As a result, the Park District has been actively involved in the preservation and restoration of wildlife and plant species. Once-rare osprey, bald eagles, sandhill cranes and trumpeter swans are now nesting in the park reserves. Woodland and prairie restorations have been accomplished using native wildflowers, shrubs and trees produced from seed collected in the park reserves.

Park visitors are offered abundant opportunities to view and learn about these natural resources. Careful routing of bike, hike and ski trails provides intimate views of woodlands, wetlands and prairie, as well as the wildlife that inhabit them. Outdoor education staff offer an array of programs that foster a better understanding of our environment.