

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

LCCMR ID: 205-F

Project Title:

Environmental Learning in Minnesota (ELM) Grant Program

LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:

F. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ \$1,000,000

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ \$0

Summary:

The ELM Grant Program would fund "real world environmental learning experiences" that increase the environmental literacy of Minnesotans. The administrative structure for the program is in place.

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Location:

Region: Statewide

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

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

PROJECT TITLE:

Environmental Learning in Minnesota (ELM) Grant Program

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

WHY: Minnesota's current environmental challenges rely on environmentally literate citizens – those who have “the capacity to perceive and interpret the relative health of environmental systems and take appropriate action to maintain, restore, or improve the health of those systems” (Disinger & Roth, 1992). Studies show that while Minnesota citizens are aware of environmental issues, the depth of their understanding is lacking. Clearly, high quality environmental education needs to be an integral part of every student's education in Minnesota if we are to address diverse environmental issues. There is a strong and talented EE community in Minnesota, with the ability to make large strides toward achieving the goals outlined in our state environmental education plan. However, classroom teachers and non-formal educators throughout the state consistently report that funding is a major barrier for their EE programs.

GOAL: Minnesota has a strong guiding document for EE called *GreenPrint: A State Plan for Environmental Education, third edition* www.seek.state.mn.us/publications/p-ee5-01.pdf. Twelve audiences are identified by the plan. Learning outcomes are identified for each audience. The goal of the Environmental Learning in Minnesota (ELM) Grant Program is to fill gaps in funding to support “real-world” environmental learning for Minnesota citizens and thus increase environmental literacy in the state as measured by the level of quality environmental education programs being offered in the state.

HOW: The ELM Grant Program will achieve the goals and outcomes of the *GreenPrint* by providing small grants (\$3,000 – \$50,000) to Minnesota communities, schools, and educational organizations. These grants will be in a two-tiered structure: (1) GreenPrint Grants for statewide efforts up to \$50,000, and (2) Audience Specific Grants up to \$15,000 for the achievement of outcomes for differing audience sectors listed in the *GreenPrint*.

The ELM Grant Program relies on a solid partnership already developed between the Minnesota Association for Environmental Education (MAEE), and the state agency mandated to provide leadership and resources for statewide environmental education, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The administrative and management structure to be used in the ELM Grant Program was refined through a 2008-2009 \$90,000 pilot grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Environmental Education Advisory Task Force (MPCA EEATF) to the MAEE. MAEE developed the request application, scoring rubric, grant publicity, awarded grants, and maintained records. 23 successful projects were funded, with 5,600 participants in funded EE projects. Due to the pilot project, the ELM Grant Program is well positioned to succeed in providing resources to accomplish the outcomes for all audience sectors outlined in *GreenPrint*.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: Secure and contract a Program Manager for ELM Grant Program **Budget:** \$ 60,000

The ELM steering committee, comprised of MAEE members/board members and EEATF members will interview and hire the manager who will then take over the management of the program.

Deliverable

- | | Completion Date |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Develop position description for Project Manager | August 2010 |
| 2. Hire Project Manager | October 2010 |
| 3. Provide orientation for Project Manager and meet with joint steering committee | November 2010 |

Result 2: Development of Request for Proposals (RFP) for each tier of the two-tiered grant program, including a scoring rubric for evaluation of applicants. **Budget:** \$ 4,000

In conjunction with the project steering committee, surveys will be developed and implemented, needs determined and RFP distributed. After the application process is closed, a retreat will be conducted with the steering team and invited environmental education professional volunteers to score and rank the received proposals.

Deliverable

- | | Completion Date |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Survey EEATF and MAEE membership to determine priority funding areas | October 2010 |

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 2. Create and distribute RFP for both grants | January 2011 |
| 3. Develop and test pilot scoring rubric for application to each grant program | February 2011 |

Result 3: Review and score applications according to rubric **Budget:** \$ 8,700
 Using the processes developed for the ELM Grant Program, applications will be logged and scored. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the proposal review.

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. Conduct retreat and score all submitted complete applications	March 2011

Result 4: Effectively administer GreenPrint Grants and Audience Specific Grants **Budget:** \$ 914,300
 In accordance with existing ELM grant management and administrative structures and protocols, the GreenPrint Grant Program requires an initial payment (75% percent of each project’s costs) for start-up costs. In addition, the Audience Specific Grants are paid out at the completion of the grant project in a reimbursement format. To that end, each grant allocated with these funds will require communication, oversight, mentoring, and perhaps site visits.

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. Dispense initial grant payments	March 2011
2. Develop record-keeping process for receipts/finances	May 2011
3. Make payment disbursements as needed	June 2013
4. Project oversight and office management	June 2013

Result 5: Create and distribute ELM Grant Program communications **Budget:** \$ 3,000
 Design, develop, and distribute an ELM program brochure, video clip, and promotional presentation based upon photos, videos, and testimonials from grantees.

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. Review and analyze final reports form recipients	May 2013
2. Review and choose photos for brochure and presentation	Feb 2013
3. Design and print full color brochure and presentation about ELM	June 2013
4. Design and edit full color, with sound, promotional video	March 2013

Result 6: Evaluation and reporting **Budget:** \$ 10,000
 The goal of the Environmental Learning in Minnesota Grant Program is to provide opportunities for Minnesota citizens to engage in “real-world environmental learning.” Demographic information from recipients and the participants that benefit from receiving funding from the ELM Grant Program will be gathered and used to produce a final report on the program.

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. Written report including process and results of the program	May 2013
2. Presentation of findings to both the EEATF and the MAEE Board of Directors	June 2013

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

MAEE will provide the administration of the grant program as well as advisory members for the steering committee. The MPCA EEATF will provide advisory members to the steering committee. Currently the steering committee consists of Lee Ann Landstrom, EEATF board member and former EEATF chair, Pete Cleary, current EEATF chair, Brinkley Prescott, MAEE board president, Megan Nysse, MAEE board member.

B. Timeline Requirements

The program could be adapted to fit any timeline, however the ideal timeline listed has taken into account the best time of year for applicants to apply and for projects to then take place during all seasons of the year. To allow for more extensive projects, a two-year window is preferred.

C. Long-term Strategy

As part of its monthly meetings, the Environmental Education Advisory Task Force has an ELM Grant committee that is looking at other sources of funding to sustain this program.

ELM Grant Program - MAEE - Project Budget

IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET (2 years)

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Personnel:	
Program Manager (80% salary; 20% benefits) - This will be one, half-time position over two years.	\$ 60,000
Contracts:	
Graphic Designer - Design program materials and report	\$ 5,000
Education Consultant - Develop scoring rubric for proposals	\$ 2,000
Program Assistant - Assist Program Manager during the busiest times of the program such as just after the submission deadline, during the review process and during the completion/reporting period.	\$ 11,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	
Office supplies, Printing, Copying and Postage - Correspondence with applicants, printing of materials & reports	\$ 8,000
Room rental, food, gift cards - Grant review process	\$ 700
Exhibit fees & associated registrations - Table at several events to publicize the program	\$ 2,000
Travel:	
Mileage - Program Manager visits to a sampling of programs & to exhibit opportunities	\$ 1,000
Other:	
Grant Dollars to Distribute - Funds to be distributed to programs chosen through the grant review process	\$ 910,300
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$ 1,000,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
In-kind Services During Project Period: MAEE will provide volunteer hours toward the management of the program	\$ 5,000	

Environmental Learning in Minnesota (ELM) Grant Program

PROJECT MANAGER QUALIFICATIONS

Brinkley Prescott, Minnesota Association for Environmental Education board President: Brinkley has been on the board of MAEE for 6 years. Over the last year, Brinkley has provided supervision of the Environmental Learning in Minnesota (ELM) Grant Program from its inception to the current successful implementation. She crafted the initial work plan with Lee Ann Landstrom, another steering committee member and board member of the Environmental Education Advisory Task Force, and worked alongside other advisory committee members to hire a manager and to bring the program to its current level of operation.

Brinkley brings to the project 18 years in the field of environmental education, including extensive administrative experience in Minnesota, New York, Alabama and Georgia. Currently Brinkley is a Program Administrator for the Center for Global Environmental Education at Hamline University. Previously she was the Development Associate for Eco Education in St. Paul for five years. Brinkley and the steering committee will hire a qualified Program Manager to manage the program. Brinkley and the steering committee will oversee the manager and meet regularly as an advisory committee.

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

The **Minnesota Association for Environmental Education** has been in existence since 1992 as a membership organization whose mission is to support and advance environmental education in the state. The organization has a strong, sustainable structure that can support the ELM Grant Program, and the program fits within the mission and strategic plan of the organization. The board consists of 12 members and is supported by an extensive network of volunteers and an Administrative Assistant. www.naaee.org/maee

The **Environmental Education Advisory Task Force** of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency advises the MPCA Commissioner and ultimately the Governor on environmental education issues. The board consists of qualified citizens/professionals from each of the Minnesota legislative districts as well as representatives from state agencies. www.seek.state.mn.us/eemn_1.cfm

