

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

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**LCCMR ID: 207-F**

**Project Title:**

Agassiz Lowlands Environmental Learning Area

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**LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:**

F. Environmental Education

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**Total Project Budget: \$** \$753,790

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

**Other Non-State Funds: \$** \$5,000

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**Summary:**

This project will establish an Environmental Education Curriculum by developing an Environmental Learning Area on a one hundred and twenty acre site adjacent to Lake of the Woods K-12 School.

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**Name:** Steve Wymore

**Sponsoring Organization:** Lake of the Woods School, District 390

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**Location:**

**Region:** NW, NE

**County Name:** Beltrami, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods, Roseau

**City / Township:**

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

# MAIN PROPOSAL

## PROJECT TITLE: Agassiz Lowlands Environmental Learning Area

### I. PROJECT STATEMENT

This project will establish an Environmental Education Curriculum by developing an Environmental Learning Area on a one hundred and twenty acre site adjacent to the Lake of the Woods K-12 School. This area will be named the Agassiz Lowlands Environmental Learning Area. By providing a setting and curriculum, this innovative Outdoor Classroom will increase environmental education activities for students, teachers and community members.

#### The goals for this project are:

- To utilize the outdoor classroom and incorporate it into the school's curriculum
- To restore and enhance an 8-acre borrow pit to a functioning wetland
- To develop a series of multi-use interpretive nature trails
- To provide learning stations and interpretive areas along the trail system

The population served by this innovative Outdoor Classroom will include residents of Lake of the Woods (LOTW), Roseau, Koochiching and Beltrami Counties. This three-year community driven project will provide access to an Outdoor Classroom for all students, staff, community members and visitors of Minnesota's Agassiz Lowlands.

### II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

#### Result 1. Wetland Restoration and ADA Boardwalk

**Budget: \$253,575**

SWCD personnel will oversee this phase of the project, which includes the restoration of a highly degraded area approximately eight acres in size. The site will be re-graded and planted with native wetland species and boardwalks will be constructed to provide access to the site. The wetland restoration will be the centerpiece of the Agassiz Lowlands Environmental Learning Area and will teach about the ecology and benefits of wetlands.

##### Deliverable

1. Topographic survey of degraded site
2. Wetland restoration plan developed
3. Site is re-graded and seeded
4. Plant plugs are installed
5. Boardwalks and bridges constructed

##### Completion Date

August 2010  
January 2011  
May 2011  
May 2011  
August 2012

#### Result 2. Development of Learning Stations

**Budget: \$488,215**

During this phase, the Lake of the Woods Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) personnel, the Lake of the Woods County Engineer and the school's Buildings and Grounds Supervisor, will map out and construct the learning stations and ADA trail system according to the natural features along the route. United States Fish and Wildlife personnel will help identify and avoid sensitive natural areas. Learning stations developed along the route will include: wetland restoration, Emerald Ash Borer trap station, natural history and a soils investigation station among others.

##### Deliverable

1. Learning stations will be mapped

##### Completion Date

August 2010

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 2. Learning stations areas are brushed and developed    | July 2011      |
| 3. Multi-use, ADA interpretive trail system constructed | September 2011 |
| 4. Wildlife observation kiosks are constructed          | August 2012    |

**Result 3. Outdoor classroom curriculum developed. Budget: \$12,000**

During this phase of the project, the Enrichment Program Coordinator will develop an Environmental Education curriculum to disseminate to staff. The curriculum will follow the School Forest guidelines for outdoor classrooms. Wetland education workshops and Community Education classes will be incorporated in the wetland restoration project and teacher in-service trainings will be implemented. Teacher surveys will aid in future curriculum development.

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Curriculum packets are developed for K-12 students	August 2010
2. "Teaching in the Outdoors" DNR trainings for all staff	August 2011
3. Surveys are distributed and compiled for feedback	August 2012
4. Teacher training workshops continue	June 2013

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

Lake of the Woods School, District 390, will be directly responsible for developing and maintaining the Outdoor Classroom. The Lake of the Woods SWCD personnel will coordinate the wetland restoration. Other partners include the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Lake of the Woods County Environmental Services, the Lake of the Woods Natural Resources Conservation Service, the MN DNR Divisions of Wildlife and Forestry, the Community Education Director, the Master Gardeners, the Baudette Rotary and the City of Baudette Council.

**B. Timeline Requirements**

This grant will run for three years: July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2013. Many of the projects are season-dependent, and need to be completed during the summer months.

**C. Long-Term Strategy**

The concept for this project has evolved from grassroots efforts. The Agassiz Lowlands Environmental Learning Area has been adopted by the School Forest Committee as a top priority project.

Volunteer and in-kind hours have led to developing this proposal. While funding has been focused on offsite School Forest sites, this grant award will be the catalyst for the onsite environmental learning area.

The long-term strategy for the Outdoor Classroom involves continued pursuit of funding to enhance the area. Enhancements will include learning stations for bird watching, natural history interpretation, forest management, archaeological areas, a community organic garden, a soil profile station, archery area, butterfly garden, wetland vegetation monitoring site, and an Emerald Ash Borer trapping station.

The School Forest Committee will spearhead the effort to gain the support of the surrounding communities through educational programs. On-going financial support will be sought through Environmental Education grants and local fundraisers. The Lake of the Woods School personnel and School Forest Committee volunteers will establish a site maintenance program.

## Project Budget

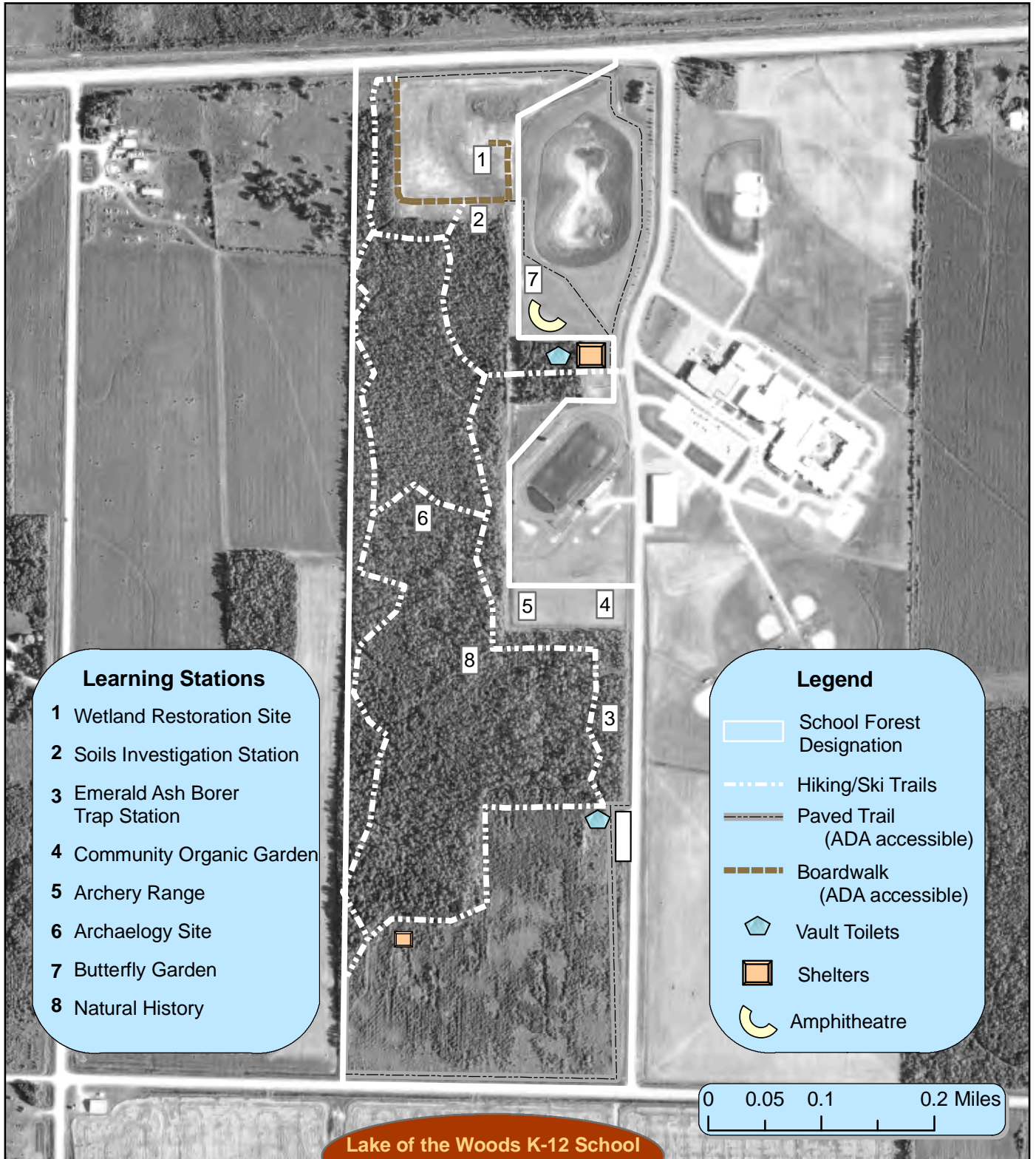
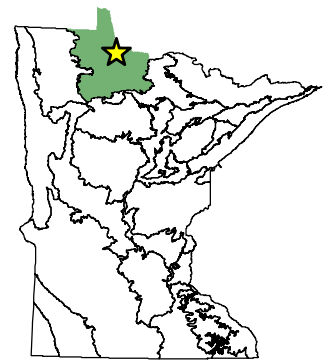
### IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET (*Three years*)

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<b>Contracts:</b>	
LOTW SWCD Personnel: wetland restoration contract for topographic site survey, plan development, establishment and monitoring, educational exhibit development and project coordination	\$ 7,000
Enrichment Program Coordinator: 250 hours x \$40/hr for curriculum development, staff coordination and community education efforts	\$ 10,000
DNR Contract for Project Wet, Project Wild and Project Learning Tree staff development workshops: 4 @ \$500 each	\$ 2,000
Trail Clearing 16hrs x \$150/hr. Put out to bids for local landscaping contractors (to be determined)	\$ 2,400
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b>	\$ -
Interpretive Display Signage: 20 at \$500 each	\$ 10,000
Maintenance Equipment Budget: Bobcat Brush Head brusher attachment \$20,000 ea.; Trail Groomer \$10,000 ea.	\$ 30,000
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b>	\$ -
Learning stations with connecting interpretive trails (meets ADA requirements): Bituminous pavement 6,615 ft. x \$65/ft; ; 2- wildlife observation kiosks @ 196 sq ft x \$20/sq ft; materials for learning stations, including posts, signage, brochures and displays to incorporate into each station 8 @ \$1,000 ea.	\$ 445,815
Wetland Restoration Budget: purchase and plant plugs for observation plots, seeding for 8 acres, weed management, grading and excavation	\$ 15,000
Composite boardwalk 1795/ft x \$125/ft	\$ 224,375
Bridges (3) @ 120 sq. ft. x \$20/sq. ft.	\$ 7,200
<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR</b>	<b>\$ 753,790</b>

### 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>		
School Forest Funds - forest harvest income	\$ 5,000	Pending
<b>Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>		
State Forest Nursery tree donation for School Forest Plantings	\$ 1,000	Pending
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period:</b>		
School Forest Committee Volunteer Hours	\$ 21,600	Secured
Supporting Natural Resource Professional Partner Hours	\$ 10,200	Secured
Community Organizations and Volunteer Hours	\$ 15,300	Secured
Student hours for educational project development	\$ 5,400	Secured
<b>Funding History:</b>	\$ -	

# II The Agassiz Lowlands Environmental Learning Area



## **Project Managers' Qualifications and Organization Description**

The umbrella organization for this project is the Lake of the Woods School, District 390. The school is located just west of the city of Baudette, which is also the county seat. The School Forest Committee, made up of school staff and board members, local Department of Natural Resources Staff and Soil and Water Conservation District staff has developed the proposal for the Agassiz Lowlands Environmental Learning Area. The School Forest Committee makes recommendations to the School Board in regards to projects and programs within the School Forest. The Lake of the Woods School Superintendent, Steve Wymore, serves as secretary for the School Forest Committee and he has been a tireless advocate for the project.

Project Managers for the Agassiz Lowlands Environmental Learning Area include School Forest Committee members, Reed McFarlane and Bruce Hasbargen.

**Reed McFarlane** is the Buildings and Ground Supervisor for the Lake of the Woods School. His position includes complete site maintenance for the entire school building, the surrounding acreage and is in charge of the custodial staff. He is also the transportation supervisor and oversees the school's fleet of buses. Outside of work, Mr. McFarlane has strong ties to the land and conservation and is a member of the Minnesota Forestry Association and actively manages his woodlands.

**Bruce Hasbargen** is the Director of Public Works for Lake of the Woods County. In this capacity he oversees all activities of the Highway and Solid Waste departments including: county parks and public ditches. He performs administrative and professional engineering work for all aspects of the Public Works Department.

Support staff for the project includes the Lake of the Woods County Soil and Water Conservation District Resource Technician, Corryn Trask, and the School Forest Coordinator, Jenny Moorman. Both Moorman and Trask also serve on the School Forest Committee.

**Corryn Trask** holds a B.S. in Biology and has served as a Resource Technician for the Lake of the Woods SWCD for four years. Her jobs duties include conservation program administration, private landowner technical assistance, and implementing the county's Water Plan, Wetland Management Plan and Cost Share Program. Prior to this position, Ms. Trask worked under the NW Region Resource Management Specialist for the MN DNR Parks performing prairie, woodlands and wetland management and restoration projects.

**Jenny Moorman** is the Enrichment Program Coordinator at the Lake of the Woods School and has been appointed as the School Forest Coordinator. Mrs. Moorman has assisted in establishing a River Watch Program in the High School and has recently completed trainings for Project Wet, Project Wild, Project Learning Tree and the MinnAqua Program. She holds an Elementary teaching license with an emphasis in biology and has a Middle School Life Science Licensure.