

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

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**LCCMR ID: 224-G**

**Project Title:**

A Minnesota Water Portal for 21st Century Communication

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**LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:**

G. Creative Ideas

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**Total Project Budget: \$** \$378,000

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

**Other Non-State Funds: \$** \$0

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**Summary:**

The Minnesota Water Portal will provide robust synthesis of activities in a "virtual" agency designed to transform how the water community works, thinks about itself, and is perceived by others.

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**Sponsoring Organization:** MN Environmental Quality Board

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**Location:**

**Region:** Statewide

**County Name:** Statewide

**City / Township:**

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

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# MAIN PROPOSAL

## PROJECT TITLE: A Minnesota Water Portal for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communication

### I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Minnesota prides itself on being a national leader in tackling water concerns, with innovative efforts across the state by citizen volunteers, non-profit organizations, government and the research community. However, the current approach leaves people unsure about who does what and why, and sometimes even whether coordination actually takes place. A comprehensive Internet presence that brings together the various programs, efforts, information and plans could help address this confusion. It is time for Minnesota to fully use the Internet in support of 21<sup>st</sup> century governance by designing a forum to engage citizens, advocacy organizations, businesses, local governments, state agencies, the research community and legislators. The outcome of this proposal will be the Minnesota Water Portal, a comprehensive and robust synthesis of Minnesota actions in water; in effect, creating a virtual Minnesota water agency. The portal will be developed in phases with the ultimate goal of transforming how the water community works, thinks about itself, and is perceived by others.

The overall goals are to:

- Create a virtual water agency through establishment of the Minnesota Water Portal
- Develop a comprehensive resource for people to access water programs, studies and efforts in Minnesota
- Design new pathways for meaningful, issue- and land-based citizen interaction with programs and decision makers
- Support the sharing of integrated information by state and local agencies
- Change people's perception of Minnesota water management by helping to clarify roles and responsibilities, and engineering opportunities for a more responsive system of management

### II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

**Result 1: Stakeholder needs assessment.** Project partners will engage stakeholders to help identify portal needs and desired features. The Freshwater Society will tap its Guardianship Council to engage citizen interests in conversations about how Minnesota can improve its water awareness. The Water Resources Center at Mankato will work with the Minnesota River Board and its clients to identify needs from a unified river basin perspective. EQB will collaborate with state partners to identify their program delivery needs, emphasizing opportunities to highlight the information they provide and integrate that information across department boundaries.

**Budget:** \$75,000      **Completion date:** March 2011

**Deliverables:**

1. Stakeholder forums and other outreach activities conducted by the Freshwater Society, Water Resources Center at Mankato and EQB
2. Memoranda on stakeholder needs and related design ideas

**Result 2: Minnesota Water Portal design and construction.** WaterThink, LLC consultants will identify possible design elements based upon models in use across the world in response to identified stakeholder needs and given project budget limitations. The project will contract for construction of the portal based upon the request for proposals developed by EQB with advice from WaterThink and the rest of the project team. EQB will contract with the Land Management Information Center to develop an interactive GIS-based map designed to help users identify

plans, projects and information available to meet their needs. Project partners and consultants will assess development issues, stakeholder feedback and design changes required for establishing an engaging and easy-to-use portal.

**Budget:** \$253,000    **Completion date:** June 2012

**Deliverables:**

1. Memorandum on possible design elements and options
2. GIS map capable of identifying resources available in any county or minor watershed across the state, and recommendations for improving the connection capability
3. The Minnesota Water Portal, phase one

**Result 3: Communication and implementation strategy.** EQB and the Freshwater Society will collaborate in development and implementation of a strategy for getting the word out about the new Minnesota Water Portal. As part of the strategy, the Society will produce a series of short videos to introduce the Minnesota Water Portal and explain the tools it offers for connecting people, programs, information and issues.

**Budget:** \$150,000    **Completion date:** June 2012

**Deliverables:**

1. A communication strategy that introduces the Minnesota Water Portal to Minnesotans
2. Video series and map components posted on the portal
3. Educational workshops and feedback on The Minnesota Water Portal

### **III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

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

The Environmental Quality Board (John Wells, Princesa Hansen and a project staff will manage the project, lead collaborations with a focus on engaging state government agencies, and manage portal development contracts. The Freshwater Society (Gene Merriam, President, Joan Nephew, Executive Director, and Pat Sweeney, Communications) will:

- Capitalize on the heightened awareness created by **2010 The Year of Water**
- Provide advice to ensure that research is presented or translated into language citizens can understand and use
- Develop a series of short education videos to introduce the portal

Minnesota State University at Mankato Water Resources Center (Shannon Fisher, Director and Susan Carlin, Minnesota River Board program coordinator) will engage Minnesota River stakeholders and develop a Minnesota River component of the water portal. WaterThink, LLC (Larry Baker, PHD) will provide expertise on water policy, nonpoint source pollution, and adaptive management to design of the portal

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

The project will take two years.

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

This is a unique project and proposal, but has come out of recent statewide planning efforts, including those of the University of Minnesota—LCCMR *Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan*; the Freshwater Society *Water is Life* project; the Citizens League water policy study, and the Environmental Quality Board *Managing for Water Sustainability* study, each of which calls for new steps in coordination and communication. The project also will link to the proposed sustainable water framework activity and the state water plan. The project will identify needs for future consideration, including opportunities for portal improvement and recommendations for ongoing maintenance and support.

# Project Budget

A Minnesota Water Portal for 21st Century Communication

## IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
<b>Personnel:</b>	\$ -
EQB personnel - Senior Planner (1.0 FTE)	\$ 268,000
<b>Contracts: LMIC Service Bureau</b> for portal development	\$ 75,000
<b>Contracts: The Freshwater Society</b> for communications, consultation and video productions	\$ 50,000
<b>Contracts: Minnesota State University at Mankato, Water Resources Center</b> for stakeholder engagement and advice on a Minnesota River demonstration	\$ 35,000
<b>Contracts: WaterThink, LLC</b> to research Web portal design innovations	\$ 35,000
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> <i>In this column, list out general descriptions of item(s) or item type(s) and their purpose - one line per item/item type.</i>	\$ -
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> Website hosting	\$ 5,000
	\$ -
<b>Travel:</b> In-state travel to townhall meetings to connect with local government, stakeholders and citizens	\$ 10,000
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b>	\$ -
<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR</b>	<b>\$ 478,000</b>

## V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
<b>Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b> Freshwater Society and Minnesota State University Water Resources Center staff also will devote services in kind to the project.	\$ 25,000	<i>Pending</i>
<b>Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>	\$ -	
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period: Existing EQB staff will devote significant time and effort to this project. The project manager, John Wells, is expected to spend 10% FTE, while EQB principal planner, Princesa Hansen, is expected to spend 15 % FTE on the project. Other state collaborators will collectively spend significant amounts of time on the project.</b>	\$ 50,000	50% Secured (EQB) and 50% Pending (other agencies)
<b>Remaining \$ from Current Trust Fund Appropriation (if applicable):</b>		<i>Indicate: Unspent? Not Legally Obligated? Other?</i>
<b>Funding History:</b>	\$ -	

## **John R. Wells**

Strategic Planning Director

**Affiliation:** Minnesota Environmental Quality Board  
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### **Resume**

#### **Summary of Qualifications:**

Experience in planning and program administration, including responsibility for EQB strategic planning activities, directing the Governor's Round Table on Sustainable Development, coordinating the *Minnesota Sustainable Development Initiative*, designing and securing passage of legislation protecting ground water, establishing local water planning, establishing a new state agency and abolishing state boards, and administering a major state grant program.

#### **Professional Experience:**

##### **1998 - Present**

##### **Strategic Planning Director, Minnesota Environmental Quality Board**

Coordinates strategic planning activities for the *Subcommittee on Future EQB Directions* and prepared the subcommittee's 2008 recommendations for a more strategic Environmental Quality Board.

Directed preparation of *Protecting Minnesota's Waters* priorities reports in cooperation with the Governor's Clean Water Cabinet for the 2008-09, 2006-07, and 2004-5 biennia.

Directed development of *Use of Minnesota's Renewable Water Resources: Moving toward Sustainability*, the first state analysis of how Minnesota's water supplies match up against demand at the county scale, today and in the future.

Prepared Board and Department of Administration assessments of priority natural resources issues for the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources in 2006.

Coordinated Smart Growth initiatives for the Board and the Office of Strategic and Long Range Planning, including development of Smart Growth criteria for capital bonding and tax exempt bonding allocation authority; the planning guide, *Under Construction: Tools and Techniques for Local Planning* in 2002; *Connecting with Minnesota's Urban Rivers: Helping Cities Make Sustainable Choices for the Future* in 2002; *From Policy to Reality: Model Ordinances for Sustainable Development* in 2000; the *Final Scoping Document for a Generic Environmental Impact Statement on Urban Development in Minnesota* in 2000; and the framework paper, *Growing Smart in Minnesota* in 1999.

Directed the LCMR-supported project investigating the errant economic and policy signals sent by selected state policies and programs, described in the 1999 project report, *Economics for Lasting Progress*.

**1996 - 1998**

**Director, Governor's Round Table on Sustainable Development**

Directed the Minnesota Round Table on Sustainable Development, a 30-member forum appointed by the Governor in January 1996. Responsible for the Round Table's report, *Investing in Minnesota's Future: An Agenda for Sustaining Our Quality of Life*, and related policy studies on sustainable development, including *Challenges for a Sustainable Minnesota* and the LCMR-supported *Pathways to Sustainable Development*.

**1992 - 1996**

**Coordinator, Minnesota Sustainable Development Initiative**

Coordinated the *Minnesota Sustainable Development Initiative* for the Environmental Quality Board and Governor. Managed the process by which the Initiative's seven teams and their 105 Governor-appointed citizens addressed environmental and economic issues in agriculture, energy, forestry, manufacturing, minerals, recreation and settlement. Responsible for preparation of the 1994 report of the teams, *Redefining Progress: Working toward a Sustainable Future* and the Environmental Quality Board's follow-up convention, the *Congress on Sustainable Development*, in February 1994.

**1985 -1992**

**Director, EQB Water Program**

Directed the EQB Water Resources Committee, responsible for preparation of the *Protecting Minnesota's Waters* series of policy reports, including: *Minnesota Water Resources Monitoring Plan* (1992), *Water Research Needs Assessment* (1991), *Water Trends* (1991), and *Minnesota Water Plan* (1991).

Coordinated agency development of the Minnesota Ground Water Protection Act of 1989.

Developed the legislative initiative establishing the Board of Water and Soil Resources in 1987.

Initiated and administered the 52-county pilot comprehensive local water planning project funded by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources in 1987.

Developed environmental agency organizational alternatives for the Perpich Administration in 1986.

**1983 -1985**

**Senior Hydrologist and Policy Analyst, EQB Water Program**

Developed the Comprehensive Local Water Management Act adopted by the Legislature in 1985.

**1979 -1983**

**Senior Hydrologist, Minnesota Water Planning Board**

Conducted the *Special Study on Local Water Management* and Consolidation Feasibility Study that provided the framework for the 1985 Comprehensive Local Water Management Act and the law establishing the Board of Water & Soil Resources in 1987.