

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2011-2012 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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**LCCMR ID: 187-G**

**Project Title:** Creating and Maintaining an Environmental Culture

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**Category:** G. Environmental Education

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**Total Project Budget:** \$ \$245,953

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 2 yrs, July 2011 - June 2013

**Other Non-State Funds:** \$ 120,000

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**Summary:**

The purpose of the program is to create a culture where environmental philosophies and practices are embedded into everyday occurrences. By providing knowledge and opportunities, environmental literacy will increase.

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**Name:** Cara Rieckenberg

**Sponsoring Organization:** Prior Lake-Savage Area School District

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**Location**

**Region:** Metro

**Ecological Section:** Minnesota and NE Iowa Morainal (222M)

**County Name:** Scott

**City / Township:** \_\_\_\_\_

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_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity	_____ Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ Employment
			_____ TOTAL _____%

## 2011-2012 MAIN PROPOSAL

### PROJECT TITLE: Creating and Maintaining an Environmental Culture

#### I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The Prior Lake-Savage Area School (PLSAS) District is committed to being environmentally focused and wise stewards of our resources. We seek to expand and embed an environmental focus across our entire District; however, due to current financial shortfalls, the program we started is facing drastic cuts. Funding is needed to continue program expansion and sustainment.

The overall goals of the program include: Adjustment and reorganization of environmental education (EE) and outdoor experiential curriculum to integrate and embed into all E-12 core academic areas; Provide professional development opportunities to all district staff on such topics as: teaching in the outdoor schoolyard, embedding EE into writing, flora/fauna identification, etc.; Expand local and state-wide partnerships allowing for the PLSAS Environmental Program to be a true community collaborative effort; Develop and maintain schoolyard classrooms at each school allowing for native species growth, habitat promotion, restoration and preservation to provide more authentic learning experiences; and Provide out-of-school learning opportunities for E-12 students.

The outcomes of these goals include increased: environmental literacy in all E-12 staff and students; practices of sustainable conservation/stewardship actions in all staff and students; number of field-based and issues/inquiry environmental classes offered; of EE concepts and content integrated into E-12 core curriculum; number of schoolyard classrooms; teacher confidence, knowledge and attitudes on environmental concepts and content; and opportunities for out-of-school time EE learning.

Outcomes will be achieved by: Developing a plan and working collaboratively with partners to ensure schoolyard classrooms are created utilizing native plants and promoting restoration of natural areas; Utilizing NAAEE Excellence in Education: Guidelines for Learning (E-12) as guidelines for embedding EE into core subjects; Assessing staff and student environmental literacy utilizing a variation of The Third Minnesota Report Card for Environmental Literacy survey; Assessing and making recommendations for change of 6-12 course offerings and elementary essential lessons that promote environmental concepts and content; Convening an Environmental Steering Committee with representation from major stakeholders, including community groups, to assess and ensure progress is occurring; and Purposeful planning and collaboration for professional development focused on EE concepts, content and best practices.

#### II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

##### **Activity 1:** Hiring of Half-Time Naturalist **Budget:** \$84,117

Description: The Naturalist will model lessons, provide professional development, ensure conservation and stewardship practices are happening, and assist in developing and maintaining partnerships.

Outcome	Completion Date
Increased environmental literacy in all E-12 staff and students	June 2013
Increased teacher confidence, knowledge and attitudes on environmental concepts and content	June 2013
Increased practices of sustainable conservation and stewardship actions	June 2013

##### **Activity 2:** Hiring of Half-Time EE Coordinator **Budget:** \$85,383

Description: The Coordinator will model lessons, oversee curriculum integration, provide professional development, ensure conservation and stewardship practices are happening, develop and maintain partnerships, chair the district Environmental Steering Committee, and oversee all related programs.

Outcome	Completion Date
Increased environmental literacy of all E-12 staff and students	June 2013
Increased teacher confidence, knowledge and attitudes on environmental concepts and content	June 2013
Increased practices of sustainable conservation and stewardship actions	June 2013
Increased number of field-based and issues/inquiry environmental classes	June 2012
Increase of EE concepts and content integrated into curriculum	June 2012

Increased number of schoolyard classrooms at each of the 11 school sites	June 2012
Increased opportunities for out-of-school time EE learning	June 2012

**Activity 3:** Utilize partnerships to create and maintain schoolyard classrooms **Budget:** \$54,550

Description: Develop and maintain schoolyard classrooms allowing for native species growth, habitat promotion, restoration and preservation to provide more authentic learning experiences

Outcome	Completion Date
Increased number of schoolyard classrooms at each of the 11 school sites	June 2012

**Activity 4:** Hire Junior Naturalist Advisors at ten school buildings **Budget:** \$21,903

Description: The Advisors will oversee the implementation and development of out-of-school time opportunities for student leaders in EE

Outcome	Completion Date
Increased opportunities for out-of-school time EE learning	June 2013
Increased numbers of field-based and issues/inquiry environmental classes	June 2013

### III. PROJECT STRATEGY

#### A. Project Team/Partners

**EE Coordinator** – Cara Rieckenberg – Duties: as noted in activity description – Cost: \$85,383

**Naturalist** – Andrea Swanson – Duties: as noted in activity description – Cost: \$84,117

**Environmental Steering Committee** – EE Coordinator, Naturalist, representatives from PLSAS Operations, Professional Development, Food Services, Business Office, and elementary/secondary educators/administrators, Mike Kinney (Spring Lake-Prior Lake Watershed Director), Jon Allen (City of Savage Superintendent of Parks and Recreation)– Duties: Provide guidance and oversight of all environmental related programs and policies, assess progress and make recommendations for improvement – Donation: In-kind services

**Junior Naturalist Advisors** – One advisor from each elementary and middle school and two advisors from the high school – Duties: as noted in activity description – Cost: \$21,903

**Partner: Great River Greening/Tory Christiansen** – Duties: Provide ecological data for development of schoolyard classrooms, create and assist in implementation of schoolyard classrooms, and create maintenance plan for schoolyard classrooms. – Cost: \$24,550

**Partner: Local Nurseries** – Duties: Provide assistance in education efforts and creation of schoolyard classrooms – Costs: \$30,000 (\$3,000 per school); Donation: In-kind services, perennials, mulch, soil

**Partner: Spring Lake-Prior Lake Watershed District/Mike Kinney** – Duties: Provide assistance in educational efforts focused on water quality, watershed preservation and stewardship and in creating schoolyard classrooms and equipping classrooms with water study tools. – Donation: In-kind services and \$10,000 per year for the next 10 years

**Partner: City of Prior Lake/AI Friedges and City of Savage/Jon Allen** – Duties: Provide assistance in all EE efforts and creating schoolyard classrooms. - Donation: In-kind services, signage, mulch/dirt

**Partner: Community Education/LeAnne Weyrauch** – Duties: Work in collaboration with EE staff to provide out-of-school EE opportunities for students and community - Donation: In-kind services

#### B. Timeline Requirements

The timeline for this project will adhere to the school year dates allowing professional development workshop and summer institutes to be pre-scheduled as well as curriculum integration and schoolyard development. All primary projects will start in the Fall of 2011 with ending dates of either June 2012 or June 2013 depending upon the complexity of the activity.

#### C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

It is the school district's hope and aim that by June 2014, the EE program will be self sustaining through actions of E-12 educators, administration and directors. We believe this to be so, as it is beginning to happen within our elementary schools who have been working on this program for the past two years. By providing the program another two years to flourish and become fully embedded into every day occurrences, environmental practices will become habit and environmental concepts and content will be common place.

## 2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

### Project Title: Creating and Maintaining an Environmental Culture

#### IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
<b>Personnel:</b> EE Coordinator, 0.5 FTE, (2011-2013), Salary (79%):\$67,280; Benefits (21%):\$18,103 Naturalist, 0.5 FTE (2011-2013), Salary (79%):\$66,167; Benefits (21%):\$17,950 Junior Naturalist Advisors, 11 staff members (2011-2013), Salary (88%):\$19,250; Benefits (12%):\$2,653	\$ 191,403
<b>Contracts:</b> Great River Greening for Data Collection (soils, topography, etc.), Initial Site Visits and Analysis of each of the 10 sites, Report Writing and Management Briefs for each site, and Site Analysis Plan Drawings	\$ 24,550
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> Plants & necessary equip. as advised by Great River Greening, Watershed District, Cities of Prior Lake and Savage (\$3,000/site)	\$ 30,000
<b>Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):</b> None	\$ -
<b>Travel:</b> None (Any expenditures in this area will be covered by Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools)	\$ -
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b> None (Any expenditures in this area will be covered by Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools)	\$ -
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT &amp; NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST</b>	\$ 245,953

#### V. OTHER FUNDS

<b>SOURCE OF FUNDS</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b> Spring Lake-Prior Lake Water Shed District - \$20,000 - Secured; Jeffers Foundation - \$60,000 - Secured; Scott Cty Soil and Water Conservation District Cost Share - approx. \$40,000 - Secured	\$ 120,000	Secured
<b>Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b> None	\$ -	
<b>Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable):</b> None	\$ -	
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period:</b> PLSAS Administration, Environmental Steering Committee members, Educators, Custodians, Food Service and Community Members with roles in steering, site and curriculum committees in addition to time on task for implementation; Local nurseries with donation of plants for schoolyard classrooms; Local organizations with equipment donations	\$ 204,246	
<b>Funding History:</b> Jeffers Foundation - \$750,000 over past five years; Spring Lake-Prior Lake Watershed District - \$10,000; Community Education - \$212,000 over past five years; FilmTec - \$20,000; Scott County - \$10,000	\$ 1,002,000	

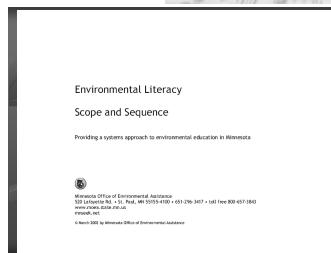
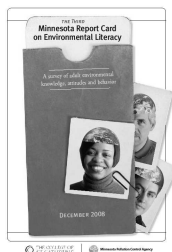
## PROJECT TITLE: Creating and Maintaining an Environmental Culture

### Graphic Depiction of Proposal

The purpose of the PLSAS EE program is to create a culture where environmental philosophies and practices are embedded into everyday occurrences. Through the empowering of our youth in knowledge and practical application of environmental awareness and stewardship, students will transfer skill and knowledge into action at school, in their homes and within their communities. As students become environmental conscientious citizens, so will the teachers, for they are the ones conveying the information, modeling practices and leading through example. By creating a district wide emphasis focusing on creating a culture that embraces the philosophies and practices of EE, we can reach out to a student population of more than 7,500 students and a community of more than 40,000 citizens each year. Other districts within the state can then replicate our programs and professional development strategies so they too can help diminish the gap of environmental awareness and stewardship by creating even more environmentally conscience citizens.

### How will this happen?

#### Curriculum and Professional Development



#### Partnerships

### PLSAS EE Program Partnerships

- Jeffers Foundation
- Prior Lake-Savage Community Education
- CLIMB Theater
- City of Prior Lake
- City of Savage
- College of St. Catherine
- Film Tec
- Fresh Water Society
- MN DNR
- Mandenick Landscaping
- New Market Sportsman Club
- Prior Lake Aggregate
- Prior Lake Optimist Club
- Prior Lake-Savage Area Educational Foundation
- Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools PTC Organizations
- Prior Lake/Spring Lake Watershed District
- Sailer's Nursery
- Scott County Environmental Health
- Scott/Dakota County Master Gardeners
- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
- Three Rivers Parks
- Toro
- Toyota Tapestry Grant Recipient
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

#### Schoolyard Classrooms for Instruction, Habitat Restoration, and Conservation Practice



**IN THE  
END.....**

Share knowledge,  
experience and  
programs with  
teachers around  
the state to help  
increase  
environmental  
literacy statewide!

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## **PROJECT TITLE: Creating and Maintaining an Environmental Culture**

### **Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description**

#### **Project Manager Qualifications:**

Cara Rieckenberg, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools Environmental Education Coordinator will be Project Manager for this grant and the Program. Her qualifications include:

**Education:** Currently working on Ed.D. in Leadership, University of St. Thomas; M.S. in Experiential Education, Minnesota State University-Mankato; B.S. in Elementary Education and Middle School Earth Science, Minnesota State University-Mankato; B.S. in Animal Ecology/Environmental Science, Iowa State University

**Experience:** PLSAS Environmental Education Coordinator - Develop staff development opportunities for district staff; Facilitate integration and implementation of EE curriculum into district core-curricular subjects; Facilitate elementary science committee to organize and create essential science lessons and science frameworks for 138 elementary teachers; Facilitated Environmental Strategic Planning Group; Develop curriculum maps for Environmental Education Curriculum; Organize, coordinate and implement all-school environmental festivals and experiential outdoor projects; Advise Junior Naturalists advisors and monitor Junior Naturalist programs; Advise EE Chairs for ten different sites' EE committees and attend monthly meetings for each site; Implement and coordinate district wide recycling and food waste programs; Oversee and maintain numerous budgets; Order, maintain and inventory equipment related to EE instruction and implementation; Survey, evaluate and report findings of staff confidence in EE instruction; Direct partnership with St. Catherine's University for pre-service teacher fieldwork experience in science instruction; Conduct formal and informal employee evaluations of district naturalist; Develop and utilize partnerships with EE professionals state-wide; Present program snapshots at professional conferences; Advise and direct other MN and WI schools and districts in implementation and integration of EE concepts and curriculum into everyday occurrences; Collaborate with Community Education to ensure quality EE related intergenerational programming; Planned and coordinated Minnesota Association for Environmental Education Teacher Workshop 2007 and 2008; Design, create and lead others in build designated outdoor learning sites on school grounds; Aligned NASA's GLOBE protocols to MDE elementary science standards for national GLOBE website and NASA; Aligned MN DNR Project Learning Tree and Project WET Activity Guide to MDE Science Standards

**Committees:** MN DNR Project WET Advisory Board; ISD #719 Community Education Advisory Board; ISD #719 Strategic Planning Committee; City of Savage McColl ELC Planning Committee; City of Savage McColl ELC Public Relations Committee; MAEE Teacher Benefits Committee; Jeffers Foundation Advisory Board; Trail Properties, Inc. Board

**Additional Past Experiences:** Sixth Grade Classroom Teacher, Adjunct Faculty St. Catherine's University, Naturalist, Belize Trip Leader, Marine Biology Instructor, Assistant Camp Foley Director.

#### **Organization Description:**

The Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools provides quality education to E-12 students and programs and services to residents from birth through adulthood living in the cities of Prior Lake and Savage, as well as the townships of Spring Lake, Cedar Lake, Credit River and Sand Creek. The District is located in the seven county metropolitan areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Situated in an expanding county, approximately 7,500 students are enrolled in the District's ten schools. Showcasing a mixture of suburban and rural living, we are fortunate that city managers place priority on preservation of natural areas. With that in mind, several of our schools are located in acres highlighting ponds, lakes, prairie, deciduous forests and wetlands.

Our mission is to educate all learners to reach their full potential as contributing, productive community members of an ever-changing world. We are innovative, environmentally focused and wise stewards of our resources. Our core values include: partnership, innovation, respect, wise stewardship, accountability and strive for excellence. Our vision includes: sustainable environmental focus sought by others; challenging, diverse and personalized learning; a culture of excellence fostering a love of learning; a district of stakeholder partnerships; technology enhancing instruction, communication and administration; moving towards class size goals through staffing and space; innovative and flexible staffing; and financial stewardship. Our strategic directions include: increasing measurable student growth and achievement; continuing financial accountability to community while using available resources to educate all students; expanding specialized programming and technology to meet student needs; expanding and embedding an environmental focus across the District; integrating technology for teaching and communications, increasing capacity and setting standards for all; and engaging our stakeholders in our mission, core values and vision.