

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

LCCMR ID: 203-G

Project Title: Sandstone Preserve and Gardens

Category: G. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ \$624,200

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 yrs, July 2011 - June 2014

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 30,000

Summary:

Build seven different native fully handicap/child accessible interpretive gardens on 20 acres at Sandstone Preserve serving 94 schools and 70 programs from the Audubon Center plus regional residents and visitors

Name: Sam Griffith

Sponsoring Organization: City of Sandstone

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Sandstone MN 55072

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Web Address sandstone.govoffice.com

Location

Region: NE

Ecological Section: Western Superior Uplands (212K)

County Name: Pine

City / Township:

_____ 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: Sandstone Preserve and Native Gardens

- I. **PROJECT STATEMENT** - The City of Sandstone locate .5 miles off of I 35 in northern Pine County proposes constructing 7 native interpretive gardens: prairie, butterfly, wildflower, wildlife, woodland, native food and medicine, and bog. This will use approximately 20 acres of the 160 acre site formerly known as the Kettle River Environmental Education Center. Each garden will have at least one companion container garden and square yard garden as demonstrations of "take home" projects. Access to these educational gardens will be along two trails, a ½ and a ¼ mile looped asphalt handicap accessible trail system. No new buildings will be built with the exception of a handicap accessible pumped toilet facility, the only hardscape construction costs will be to make the site and the existing building handicap accessible.

Why this project needs to be done – Both the Changing Demographics in Minnesota Implications for Natural Resources presentation prepared by the state Demographer in April 2006 and The 2007 Minnesota State Parks Research Report 2007 indicated that there were three populations that could be better served to foster enjoyment in the outdoors and maintain a healthy lifestyle. These populations are the elderly and obese, which are becoming an increasing percentage of the area resident and visiting regional populations, and small children. Conversations with both the Audubon Center of the North Woods and Banning State Park have confirmed that a project such as this would be useful for their current programs and building future programs. This project will create an educational resource not only for Audubon Center but also for local people in the region but also for visitors and others with special needs.

Why this location: While elder, handicapped, and child scale outdoor exhibits are plentiful in the metro areas of the state they are not in the rural regions. They are also hard to add to existing facilities. The Audubon Center is seven miles from the Preserve and has existing education programs that serve approximately 8,000 students annually has no room to offer a more biologically diverse adult and small child friendly learning area. Banning State Park less than ¼ mile from the site also sees the need, but its mission is stated in statute and does not include this kind of development. Both facilities would incorporate this facility into their existing and programming and expand elderly opportunities. .

Goals: These gardens will provide both a formal environmental education program through the Audubon Center and others and as an informal educational opportunity through interpretation. It will:

- Provide access to a relatively compact facility with seven native plant habitats not found in either a single park or anywhere else in the region, the interpretation of which will encourage an appreciation and understanding of several native biomes.
- Provide an accessible landscape for an underserved population: elderly, physically and mentally disabled or challenged persons as well as an appropriately scaled and controlled environment for small children
- Encouraging visitor's involvement by providing ideas for container and square yard native plantings that they can do in their own back yard.

Population served: An abbreviated market assessment quantifies three general populations that will be served. *Local population:* There are about 53,000 permanent and seasonal households in the counties of Aitkin, Carlton, Kanabec and Pine. Nielsen – Claritas marketing data indicates household interest in gardening is between 69.17 % and 74.85 % in these Counties. Based on a market capture rate of 20% of the interested households, the estimate of visitors from the local counties at 2 people per visit is 15,500 annual visitors. Additionally there are special needs groups such as Pine Habilitation and Supported Employment Inc. (PHASE) headquartered in Sandstone serving 90 individuals. *Visiting population:* The visiting population serves is defined by two groups of guest: summer overnight guests at the Grand Casino Hinckley complex, and camping visitors at the three closet state parks. The cross interest participation rate for gaming and gardening is 65.05 percent and camping and gardening is 32.48. The capture rate is assumed to be 10% for both groups for a total of 23,870 visitors. It is felt that both of these capture rates are conservative given that there are no comparable facilities outside of the metro area. *Audubon Center students:* In 2008 -2008 the Center served approximately 8,000 additional adult courses could be expanded and modified with the availability of the gardens.

Sandstone Preserve and Gardens

II. Description of Project Activities Activity 1: Detailed Design and Construction Budget \$ 624,200

This Phase of the project is the detailed design and construction activity of the project. This includes doing an RFP to hire a registered landscape architect to provide an ADA compliant design for the ramp, and trail and rest room facilities as well as the gardens. The plans and specs for each element of the project will be bid out by the project manager. Approximately \$200,000 of the budget is to make the area handicap accessible.

Outcomes	Completion Date
1. Planted 7 native gardens ¾ acre (prairie, butterfly, wildflower, wildlife, woodland, native food/medicine, bog) and an invasive weed interactive educational display area made of plastic plants, include container and square yard back yard garden for each	November 2012
2. Developed Two well drained asphalt handicap paths of ¼ mile and ½ mile, a ramp to the existing building, a two compartment restroom facility using existing tank	May 2013
3. Installed Interpretive signs for each garden and planting, and Kiosks (total 70)	May 2014
4. Completed hiking and snowshoeing trail to Banning State Park (not handicap accessible)	May 2014

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners - The project team is led by the City of Sandstone. These partners include: The Audubon Center and through them the educational organizations they serve which include: 72 K-12 schools, 22 community ed. programs, 22 colleges and universities, and 35 residential programs, Banning Park, and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. These organizations will participate in the development and ongoing programming of the project. Each organization will pursue its own mission while building additional programs off of the resources and opportunities made available by the preserve. .

B. Timeline Requirements - Design completed 1/30/12 Construction completed 11/30/2013, Park open 5/15/ 2014.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs - The City as project lead will build and strengthen the partnership within the region so that they may integrate this facility into their existing education programs. A key component will be expanding off of the Audubon Center programs by facilitating the use of the gardens and marketing to local residents and visitors. They will prepare marketing materials for multiple media and engage local businesses such as the Minnesota Wildlife Connection, Dazzle Gardens, Cooks Water Farm, the Pine County Master Gardeners, the local bookstores and the Minnesota Horticultural Society to supply incentives such as discount coupons and small demonstrations.

There will be no additional funds requested for maintenance. The maintenance of the buildings and hardscape will be undertaken by City Staff. The use of micro timber sales on the remaining 80 acres of sustainably managed hardwood stands will be explored to fund major repair and replacement.

Sandstone draws from a rich volunteer base for most of its civic and public projects. Gardens will be maintained under the direction of master gardeners or other knowledgeable volunteers. Physical labor to the greatest extent possible will be through community service projects done by a Federal Correctional Institution at Sandstone. This facility has 1,800 inmates and provides approximately 20 or more people a year in 3 person work crews for City Projects and is always looking for more projects. The State Correctional Facility at Willow River has a work crew that has provided the labor for fencing at the Cloquet Experimental Forrest and could be called on to do similar projects here when needed. The counties sentence to serve program has provided painting and gardening assistance in the past for the City. Because a high number of retired and current Federal Correctional Institution employees live in Sandstone the needs and limitations of the inmate work programs are well understood. Through the years they Institution which is the major employer in the city and the City have developed a very good relationship.

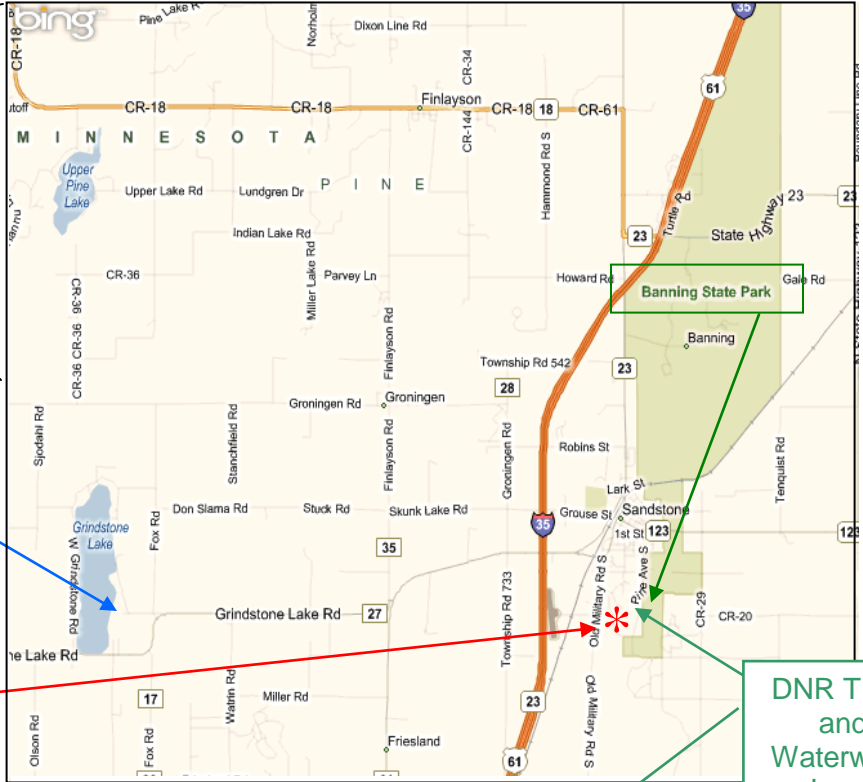
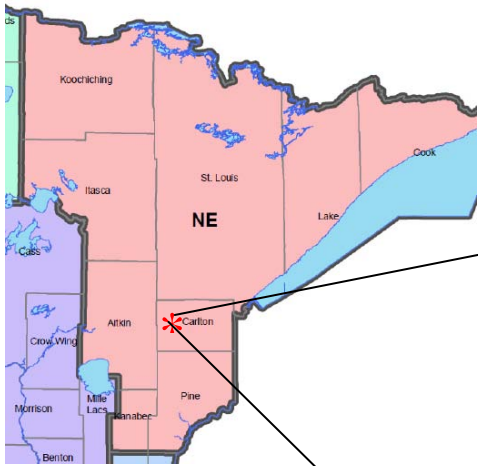
Demonstration container gardens will be planted each year as education projects for school children, and the City will ask the ten senior apartments in the County or PHASE if they would like to adopt the larger square yard gardens with physical assistance if needed from 4H and the Girl and Boy Scout Troops.

Sandstone Preserve and Gardens

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget Sandstone Preserve and Gardens		
IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 3 years for development		
BUDGET ITEM (See list of Eligible & Non-Eligible Costs, p. 13)	AMOUNT	
Contracts:	\$	-
Engineering Contracting: Survey and staking for planning and grading	\$	15,000
Landscape Architecture Contract (RFP) Construction Drawings and Specs	\$	50,700
Construction Contract: Bid Contract: Handicap restroom, ramp to building, 3/4 miles of trail clearing grading, subsurface preparation, drainage, erosion control and impervious surface.	\$	324,400
Plantings Contract: 7 themed gardens of native plants and a container and one square yard demonstration gardens	\$	119,100
Signage Contract: 70 interpretive signs, kiosks and informational signs	\$	105,000
Additional Budget Items: Connecting non handicap primitive trail to Banning State Park	\$	10,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$	624,200
V. OTHER FUNDS		
SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:	\$ -	
Sandstone Preserve Funds from logging the preserve west of Military Road	\$ 30,000	<i>Secured</i>
Initiative Foundation Grant	\$ 2,500	<i>Application</i>
Initiative Foundation: Invited application pending receipt of LCCMR funding Community Partnership Project @ \$10,000 per year.	\$ 50,000	<i>Application invited pending LCCMR Grant</i>
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: NA	\$ -	
In-kind Services During Project Period:	\$ -	
DNR Parks staff time over three years: 40 hours park manager, 16 hours marketing manager, 32 hours resource specialists planning review and coordination	\$ 3,200	Secured
Audubon Center of the North Woods: Co - directors 40 hours, marketing director 16 hours planning review and coordination	\$ 1,000	Secured
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe: Non game wildlife specialist 40 hours, Elder Coordinator 2 hours, planning review and coordination	\$ 1,200	Pending approval
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe: Day labor crew and Supervisor 200 hours	\$ 3,500	Pending approval
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): NA	\$ -	
Funding History:		
State Education Center Bonding Money 1989 Purchase of 40 acres and Programming Master plan focused on education center buildings: state funding stopped program terminated	\$ 220,000	
Building - relocation of a structurally sound wooden school house to the site	\$ 13,385	
Forestry Consultant - forest management plan	\$ 3,000	
Reforestation Cost - replanting logged area in White Pines	\$ 16,481	

Sandstone Preserve and Gardens

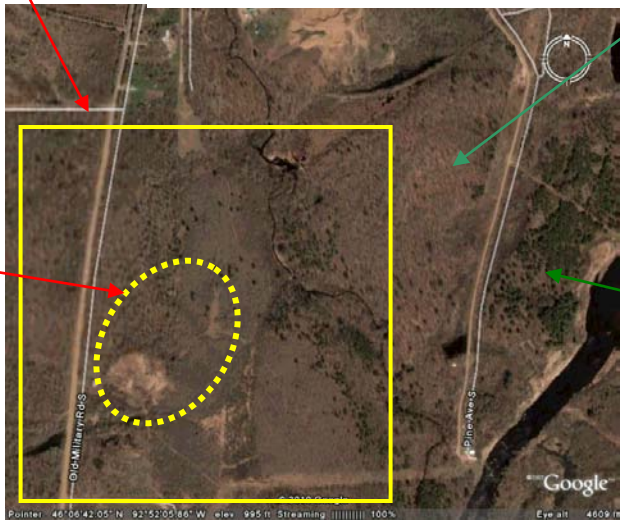
Project Location
Sandstone Preserve
And Gardens



Audubon Center of the North Woods

Sandstone Preserve and Gardens

DNR Trails and Waterways Land



Garden Area

Banning State Park

Sandstone Preserve and Gardens

Project Manager: Sam Griffith, City Administrator, City of Sandstone



Sam Griffith has been the City of Sandstone Administrator since 1999. As the Administrator, he is responsible for the day-to-day management of the affairs of the City including the supervision of 5 full; 12 part time City employees and volunteers. He oversees the work of 5 boards and commissions, recommends and manages a budget of approximately \$ 2.7 million annually including capital projects with single year capital project budgets of more than \$325,000 and prepares all state and locally required documents.

Prior to returning home to Sandstone in 1999 he spent 15 years working for the Washington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority as a Development Specialist. There he oversaw all aspects of capital projects from inception through completion including financing and coordination with local communities. Capital projects included: housing, schools and recreation areas. Projects ranged from small senior housing projects at \$600,000 to housing projects in excess of \$ 6 million.

Organization Description: City of Sandstone, MN.

The City of Sandstone is located one hour north of Minneapolis and St. Paul on Interstate 35. It is part of the St. Croix Scenic By-Way and the eastern starting point of the Tamarack Green Route and has a paved extension to the Willard Munger Trail. The relative locations of other area attractions are shown below.

Travel Distances Area Attractions			
Attraction	Miles	Attraction	Miles
Wild and Scenic Kettle River	0.0	Grindstone Lake	6.0
Robinson Park Climbing Quarry	0.0	Audubon Center of the North Woods	7.0
Minnesota Wildlife Connection	0.0	Grand Casino Hinckley	11.0
Banning State Park trail route	0.3	Hinckley Fire Museum	11.0
Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge Sandstone Unit	2.0	Moose Lake State Park	25.0
Banning State Park entrance	5.0	North West Company Fur Post	25.0
Willard Munger State Trail	5.5	St Croix State Park	27.0

Several City events draw people to the community from around the country and an occasional international visitor: Ice Fest, Kettle River Paddle Fest, and Quarry Days. While they are in town visitors can enjoy these attractions as well as the local History and Art Center, the golf course, Midwest Country Music Theater, and the farmers market. Three small city parks serve as community gathering spaces, athletic fields and children’s playgrounds.

Despite being home to the Audubon Center of the North Woods, and several state parks, which serve the physically fit, the area lacks opportunities for easy access outdoor natural resource opportunities for the elderly, physically and mentally challenged and small children. As demonstrated by their other activities this community has the community resources to be creative with what they have. However, like many rural towns with large amounts of public and non-profit land within the municipal boundaries funds for major expenditures must come from outside of the community where fiscal resources are greater.

Sandstones location near the above attractions, along I 35 and it’s location in a region that is in the top quintile of gardening activity make it a prime location for educational gardens to serve both the needs of the State and the regional community. Native gardens grow environmentally sensitive populations.