

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

LCCMR ID: 213-G

Project Title: Central Minnesota Audubon Society Environmental Education Outreach Activities

Category: G. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ \$11,410

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 1.5 yrs, July 2011 - Dec 2012

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 0

Summary:

Central Minnesota Audubon Society volunteers will approach schools within its service area with a variety of environmental education opportunities which include on-site demonstration projects or guided field trip activities.

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Sponsoring Organization: Audubon Society - Central Minnesota

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Location

Region: Central

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

County Name: Stearns

City / Township: St. Cloud

_____ 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:

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

With ever increasing budgetary constraints occurring, schools are continually cutting programs or opportunities for off-site education (mainly due to bussing costs). As a result, children are becoming more and more disconnected from nature. Richard Louv has documented nature deficit disorder in his book Last Child in the Woods. Central Minnesota Audubon Society's (CMAS) Environmental Education Outreach Program would seek to engage schools within its service area to increase environmental education opportunities by either providing on-site demonstrations such as building nest boxes and structures or providing guided tours at local parks and nature areas where environmental education curriculum requirements could be met. A variety of age groups is anticipated so environmental stewardship projects would be customized to maximize the effectiveness at the appropriate level of understanding.

A number of the area schools already interact with CMAS and receive (free) Audubon Adventures kits during the school year. These school districts would likely be the first approached by CMAS regarding outdoor environmental education opportunities. However, the environmental education outreach activities would not be limited to only those who already have a working relationship with CMAS.

The ultimate goal of this program is to expand the network of environmental education to as many facilities and student populations as possible. A major goal is to educate and motivate students of all ages about the environment and their place within and impact upon it. By making a connection with students through their experiences, tangible results may be measured (i.e. number of nest boxes built and placed in suitable habitat) and intangible results (creating an interest in nature and natural ecosystems) are possible.

CMAS serves an area that encompasses an area from Albany east to Milaca south to Big Lake and west to Monticello (11 counties... all adjacent counties to Stearns and including Mille Lacs County) obviously including all the communities within those "boundaries". Depending upon interest, a variety of populations may be served, however, it is students that will be the main focus. For the purpose of this grant application and period, CMAS proposes to approach and work with 10 schools (5 per year) to choose and carry out an age appropriate activity for their students. Funds to cover bussing costs are a critical need for any of these activities.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Bussing to Environment Outreach activities Budget: \$ 5,000

Bussing costs range from \$200 for one bus to approximately \$600 for several depending upon length of the field trip and distance traveled. CMAS is requesting \$500 per school for 10 schools but will offer services to more schools if bus funding allows. Each activity would have a minimum of the following outcomes:

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Specific, measureable outcome #1 Number of schools served	Dec. 2012
2. Specific, measureable outcome #2 Number of students educated	Dec. 2012
3. Specific, measureable outcome #3 Ecosystem or habitat enhancement	Dec. 2012
Etc. Census information and park data collected for future use	Dec. 2012

Activity 2: Flyway Field Trips Budget: \$ 1,060

Students would explore local county parks or Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) with CMAS naturalists in groups of 10 – 15 students. Each group will experience several “stations” and learn about local habitats and their importance to birds (supporting habitat-related aspects of school curriculum) while generating awareness of local natural parks.

Activity 3: “Boxing for Birds” Budget: \$ 550/school (\$5,500)

CMAS Naturalists will guide students to research a number of birds for which bird boxes will be built and distributed to proper habitat. Each student will maintain a journal of their research and observations.

Activity 4: Chimney Swifts & Purple Martins Budget: \$ 400/school (\$4,000)

CMAS Naturalists will assist schools with placement and maintenance education regarding on-site or located nest box locations. Students will research and maintain records regarding nest box usage, reproductive success, etc.

Activity 5: Chimney Swifts & Purple Martins Budget: \$ 400/school (\$4,000)

CMAS Naturalists will assist schools with placement and maintenance education regarding on-site or located nest box locations. Students will research and maintain records regarding nest box usage, reproductive success, etc.

Activity 6: Buckthorn Bustin’ Budget: \$ 350 for supplies

CMAS Naturalists will educate students in an “all day” field trip about invasive species (particularly Buckthorn) including what makes a species invasive, plant identification, methods of control, and finally a hands-on experience with controlling the invasive in a County Park or SNA.

Activity 7: Planting a Prairie Budget: \$ 300/school (\$3,000)

Students will learn about ecosystem dynamics, what species utilize prairies, unique characteristics of prairie species, and have a hands-on planting experience at a regional park where prairie restoration is planned.

Activity 8: Native Bee Homes Budget: \$ 100/school (\$1,000)

The importance of native bees (particularly mason bees) as pollinators will be stressed in this half day seminar/workshop. The life cycle of native pollinators, habitat needs, effects of herbicides and pesticides, and other curriculum requirements will be covered.

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

CMAS partners with organizations and volunteers who have expertise in the necessary topic area. These organizations include but are not limited to the MN DNR, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Watershed Districts, Local Government Units, and colleges such as SCSU, St. John’s and St. Ben’s.

B. Timeline Requirements

The timeline for this grant request would be limited to the school year and class availability.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

CMAS hopes to continue offering Environmental Education Activities to schools as funding allows in the future.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 2 years total

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel: When necessary (if not volunteered) paying speakers - 1 per event @ \$50 (or less)	\$ 500
Contracts: Not covered under this funding request	\$ -
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: 30 pairs binoculars @ \$15 each plus tax; 30 bird books @ \$18 each plus tax; tools for invasives removal (clippers/tree trimmers):10 sets @ \$20each plus tax; Gloves: 30 pairs @ \$2 each; Paint brushes:10 @\$2.50 each plus tax; Herbicide: 2 gallons @ \$20 each; construction materials for one project per school at an average of \$400 per school (wood, plants, nest box kits, concrete, etc.)	\$ 5,410
Travel: Bussing costs for schools @ \$500/school for 10 schools (or more if funding allows); mileage for 2 CMAS staff to schools @ \$.50/mile up to 100 miles round trip (assuming carpooling for those events which require more than two staff)	\$ 5,500
Additional Budget Items: Not applicable	\$ -
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 11,410

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: CMAS donation - journals for students up to 30 students per school @ 10 schools	\$ 300	Pending
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: None	\$ -	N/A
In-kind Services During Project Period: Estimated CMAS speaker/volunteer time (estimated time value for 6 staff @ \$15/hour for 16 hours planning and implementation per school and 10 schools minimum)	\$ 14,400	

Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description

Central Minnesota Audubon Society (CMAS) is a group of concerned citizens who are committed to the preservation of a clean and healthy environment for people and wildlife. We believe in the preservation of unpolluted lakes, rivers, and forests and the continued existence of critical habitat for birds and other wild life.

Nicola Blake-Bradley attended St. Cloud State University and has a Biology degree (emphasis, Wildlife Management). She has done graduate work in Environmental Studies and Biology (wetlands and water quality) as well. Ms. Blake-Bradley has worked in the environmental field for local government units for nearly 10 years. She serves on the CMAS board as Secretary and Newsletter committee. As project manager for this grant application, she plans to draw upon the expertise of volunteers with CMAS who have worked in environmental and/or education fields to facilitate the experiences. Volunteers are typically active or former SCSU professors, teachers, or experts in their career area (Soil and Water Conservation, Department of Natural Resources, School Districts, etc.).

