

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2012-2013 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 105-F**

Youth Outdoors: Mississippi River Education and Employment Opportunities

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**Topic Area:** F. Outreach/Education/Training

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**Total Project Budget:** \$ 490,000

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 2.5 yrs. July 2013 - June 2016

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

**Summary:**

Project Youth Outdoors provides environmental education trips for 7,000 youth from Grand Rapids, St. Cloud, the Twin Cities, Hastings, and Red Wing teaching fishing, canoeing, camping, and providing employment opportunities.

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**Sponsoring Organization:** Wilderness Inquiry

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**Location**

**Region:** Statewide

**County Name:** Statewide

**City / Township:**

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Funding Priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multiple Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge Base
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extent of Impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific/Tech Basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urgency
<input type="checkbox"/>	Capacity Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leverage	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	TOTAL <input type="checkbox"/> %

# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) 2012-2013 Main Proposal

## I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Minnesota has a proud heritage as a great outdoor state. That rich history and culture is at risk unless we make large-scale and coordinated efforts to counteract the current trend of lack of engagement in outdoor pursuits such as fishing, hunting, camping, and canoeing by people under the age of 30.

The *Youth Outdoors* project builds on the successful Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures (UWCA) program, a collaboration of Wilderness Inquiry, the National Park Service, the Mississippi River Fund, and other partners, which is a hands-on environmental education and recreation program on the Mississippi River by providing:

- 1) **fishing and aquatic sampling activities.**
- 2) **overnight camping** along the banks of the Mississippi in 5 communities along the River.
- 3) **outdoor education and employment opportunities.**
- 4) expansion of the program beyond Minneapolis and St. Paul, to serve the entire 7-county metro area, and outstate youth in communities such as **Grand Rapids, St. Cloud, Hastings, and Red Wing.**

Anticipated outcomes include:

- A) 6,000 youth from the Twin Cities, Grand Rapids, St. Cloud, Hastings, and Red Wing are introduced to fishing, canoeing, and camping as viable recreation pursuits on the Mississippi River.
- B) 1,000 youth participate in overnight camping along the banks of the Mississippi River or in the watershed from Grand Rapids to Hastings, and Red Wing to the Iowa border, including the Twin Cities metro area.
- C) Expansion of an aquatic sampling program on the Mississippi River, including creating a baseline of species currently in the river, and monitoring the advancement of invasive species, such as Asian Carp.
- D) 20 youth gain summer employment in outdoor and conservation jobs; 1,000 youth gain knowledge of outdoor career opportunities.

## II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

### Activity 1: Canoeing, Fishing, and Aquatic Sampling trips for 6,000 youth

**Budget: \$300,000**

The Mississippi River provides wonderful opportunities for fishing and outdoor recreation. In partnership with the MN DNR MinnAqua Program and the National Park Service, we will provide water safety, canoeing, and fishing instruction for 6,000 youth, ages 10 to 18 as a part of a daylong experience on the Mississippi River. In addition, we will demonstrate an aquatic sampling program to help monitor the health of the Mississippi River. Through this program, youth will use seine nets and other fish survey techniques to identify and document the diversity and abundance of various fish species. This will help provide additional baseline fish data and document and monitor the presence of aquatic invasive species. (\$50 x 6,000 youth = \$300,000)

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Establish aquatic sampling mechanisms	8/1/2013
2. Fishing and aquatic sampling trips for 3,000 youth in first year	6/30/2014
3. Fishing and aquatic sampling trips for 3,000 youth in second year	10/1/2015

### Activity 2: Overnight Camping and Outdoor Education Trips for 1,000 youth

**Budget: \$150,000**

Provide hands-on environmental learning trips, which will introduce youth ages 13 to 18 to camping, fishing, and canoeing opportunities that are located in their backyard. The overnight learning trips will include water quality and aquatic species education and invasive removal projects. Youth will learn about the many varieties of fish and aquatic life in the Mississippi River. We are working in partnership with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, the MN DNR, and others to establish overnight camping and water access at sites along the River. (\$150/youth x 1,000 kids = \$150,000)

Outcome	Completion Date
1. 500 youth participate on overnight environmental learning trips in year one. Activities include fishing, canoeing, and camping.	10/1/2014
2. 500 youth participate on overnight environmental learning trips in year two. Activities include fishing, canoeing, and camping.	10/1/2015

**Activity 3: Summer Employment in Environmental Jobs for 20 youth**

**Budget: \$40,000**

Wilderness Inquiry and its partners will provide environmental internships and summer employment for 20 low-income youth ages 15 to 20 (recruited from the pool of 1,000 kids served through Activity 2), which consists of:

- 3-day outdoor immersion experience
- 136 hour summer employment in an environmental job. Employers who have committed to providing jobs include, but are not limited to, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Mpls. & St. Paul Park & Rec, Wilderness Inquiry, and REI.

This grant will cover all expenses related to the environmental jobs for youth, including wages, transportation, meals, outdoor equipment, work tools, etc.

(Budget: \$500/youth x 20 youth = \$10,000 – for 3 day immersion experience with Wilderness Inquiry. \$1,500/youth x 20 youth = \$30,000 to recruitment, training, wages, and follow-up with youth)

Outcome	Completion Date
1. 10 youth complete 3-day outdoor immersion and work experience in year one.	9/30/2014
2. 10 youth complete 3-day outdoor immersion and work experience in year two.	9/30/2015
3. Establish Outdoor Career Advisory Council (individuals serving on this committee will do so as volunteers; no Trust Fund dollars pay for this)	9/1/2013
4. Follow-up and support for youth to continue their work in the outdoor industry.	12/1/2015

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners:**

**Wilderness Inquiry (WI); Contact: Greg Lais, Executive Director** – For more than 30 years, WI has safely conducted canoe trips for more than 300,000 youth and adults of all abilities and backgrounds. WI will provide the operational support necessary (canoes, paddles, life jackets, trained instructors, safety protocols, etc.) for the UWCA program. WI will also bring partnerships with the Minneapolis and St. Paul Public Schools, and other youth serving organizations.

**The National Park Service (NPS); Contact: Paul Labovitz, Superintendent** - NPS will provide educational content and Park Rangers on overnight trips. NPS will also provide opportunities for youth to perform internships in the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. NPS will broker use agreements to facilitate use of the River with other land management agencies. NPS will provide significant in-kind personnel and funding to the project.

**The Mississippi River Fund; Contact: Katie Nyberg, Executive Director** - The Mississippi River Fund will provide private fundraising support, program promotion, public relations, and evaluation coordination.

**B. Timeline Requirements:** We are requesting funding from July 1, 2013 to Dec. 31, 2015.

**C. Long-Term Strategy:** Our goal is to build public awareness, commitment, and enthusiasm for the *Youth Outdoors* project to sustain it long after the initial investment of the ENRTF. We will seek to establish long-term funding options from foundations, corporations, individuals, events, and the Federal Government (National Park Service). We aim to create a new generation of outdoor enthusiasts who understand and use state water trails throughout Minnesota for fishing and other outdoor recreation pursuits, have knowledge of water quality, ecosystem health, native and invasive species, and an understanding of outdoor and environmental career opportunities.

**Project Budget**

**IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET (2.5 years)**

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<b>Personnel (all Wilderness Inquiry Staff - total salaries for 2.5 years):</b>	
Program Director (.25 FTE)	\$ 30,000
Project Coordinator (1 FTE)	\$ 70,000
Equipment Coordinator (.5 FTE)	\$ 30,000
Project Assistant (.5 FTE)	\$ 31,000
Trail guides (30 part-time seasonal)	\$ 75,000
Benefits and taxes (15% of wages)	\$ 34,000
<b>Contracts:</b>	
Employment partners (i.e. STEP-UP, youth employment program of Mpls Public Schools, and others) to provide job training, placement, and youth wages.	\$ 30,000
U of M for project evaluation	\$ 15,000
<b>Equipment:</b>	
Fishing and aquatic sampling equipment (field microscopes, etc)	\$ 15,000
Voyager Canoe designed for fishing and aquatic sampling	\$ 15,000
Fishing and boating equipment maintenance	\$ 10,000
Tents, paddles, and other outdoor gear for overnight trips	\$ 10,000
Porta-potty rental for program sites	\$ 3,000
Safety equipment (life jackets, radios, etc)	\$ 5,000
<b>TOTAL EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>\$ 58,000</b>
<b>Transportation:</b>	
Dedicated program vehicle rental to transport staff and equipment to and from program events, gas, and maintenance. Rental allows us to have vehicle for only those months we need it for the program, netting significant cost savings.	\$ 43,000
Bus transportation for students to program sites	\$ 15,000
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b>	
Food (all meals and snacks for participants and staff on programs)	\$ 12,000
Liability Insurance - Liability insurance is essential to the running of this program; without it, we would not be able to conduct the project.	\$ 32,000
Camping fees	\$ 15,000
<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR</b>	<b>\$ 490,000</b>

**V. OTHER FUNDS**

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
<b>Wilderness Inquiry In-kind Services During Project Period*:</b> Program Direction: Exec Director, Finance Director, Assoc Director	\$ 175,000	<i>Committed</i>
<b>National Park Service In-kind Services During Project Period:</b> Program Director, Rangers to provide environmental ed curricula and interpretation.	\$ 180,000	<i>Committed</i>
<b>Mississippi River Fund In-kind Services During Project Period:</b> Executive Director and Grants to Wilderness Inquiry and the National Park Service.	\$ 135,000	<i>Pending</i>
<b>TOTAL ALL IN-KIND</b>	<b>\$ 490,000</b>	

\* We plan to solicit corporate, foundation, and individual donors to support these line items

<b>Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable):</b> <i>Specify dollar and year of appropriation from any current ENRTF appropriation for any directly related project of the project manager or organization that remains unspent or not yet legally obligated at the time of proposal submission. Be as specific as possible. Describe the status of funds in the right-most column.</i>	\$ 212,153	<i>Unspent; Approp. made in 2010. On track to use remaining \$ by project end 6/2013.</i>
<b>Funding History:</b> <i>Indicate funding secured prior to July 1, 2013, for activities directly relevant to this specific funding request. State specific source(s) of funds.</i>	\$ -	<i>Several pending; none confirmed</i>

# Youth Outdoors: Mississippi River Education and Employment Opportunities

## ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST FUNDS WOULD SUPPORT

- **6,000 youth** experience the outdoors through canoe adventures on the Mississippi River, where they will **learn to fish & participate in aquatic sampling**. Youth served live along the River in **Grand Rapids, St. Cloud, the Twin Cities, Hastings, and Red Wing**.
- Overnight environmental ed. trips for **1,000 youth**.
- **Summer jobs for 20 youth** in the outdoor industry.

## SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES FOR MN'S ENVIRONMENT

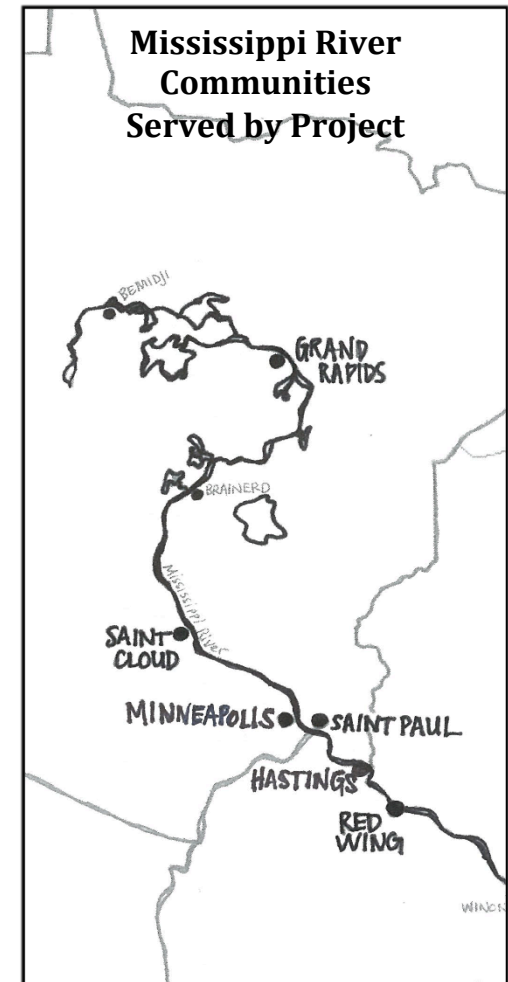
- Youth throughout MN are introduced to **outdoor recreation, fishing, and the Mississippi River**.
- Youth form connections to nature, instilling an interest & desire to practice stewardship.
- State dollars **leverage federal, local, and private resources** to expand the number of youth participating and gaining summer employment.

## LONG-TERM OUTCOMES FOR MN'S ENVIRONMENT

- More people buy fishing licenses, visit state parks, and enjoy MN's outdoors.
- A healthy river ecosystem.
- MN's outdoor industry has a market & workforce that reflect the diversity of our communities.
- Youth discover **career paths in the outdoors**, where 1 in 20 jobs exist.

## PROJECT SUMMARY

Total Youth Served: 7,000  
 Total \$ Requested: \$490,000  
 Cost per Youth Served: \$70



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

### **Greg Lais, Project Manager**

Greg Lais is the Founder and Executive Director of Wilderness Inquiry (WI), the oldest and most extensive outdoor education and travel program in the world for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Since 1978, WI has served more than 300,000 people on wilderness trips, including thousands of people with disabilities such as quadriplegia, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis or traumatic brain injury.

An expert in design and implementation of integrated outdoor programs, Mr. Lais has developed outdoor policies, written staff training manuals, adapted outdoor curriculum, developed adapted equipment and published several articles on integrated programming.

Under the direction of Mr. Lais, Wilderness Inquiry has received awards from the National Therapeutic Recreation Association, Minnesota State Council on Disability Distinguished Service Award (twice), ARC of Minnesota and many others. In March 2005, WI received the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) Community Building Award recognizing Inquiry's WI's leadership in helping to initiate change in communities and organizations that result in persons with disabilities being increasingly valued and included as community members. WI is honored to receive the American Association on Mental Retardation Full Community Inclusion Award. Mr. Lais was the recipient of the 2012 Wilderness Education Association Paul K. Petzoldt Award in recognition of his "visionary leadership in creating a world where exploring, cherishing and protecting wilderness are a human birthright for everyone."

Mr. Lais was the project manager for an Environmental Trust Fund funded project in the 1995-96 biennium, and a current project which started in July of 2010 and runs through June of 2013.

### **Wilderness Inquiry**

A non-profit organization based in the Twin Cities, WI has provided opportunities for outdoor recreation for some of our most underserved and at-risk populations since 1978. WI serves over 13,000 people annually on canoe, kayak, horsepack, dogsled and hiking trips throughout North America, including 17 different units of the National Park Service. WI has 12 full-time and 60 part-time staff.

WI maintains a fleet of twenty-five, 24-foot Voyageur canoes, 20 canoe trailers and seven, 15-passenger vans in a warehouse at its headquarters in Dinkytown near the University of Minnesota—10 minutes away from the landing at East River Flats. These canoes are an important component of the UWCA because they provide a significant margin of safety over smaller tandem canoes. They are