

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

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 116-F

Integration of Environmental and Outdoor Education into K-12

Topic Area: F. Outreach/Education/Training

Total Project Budget: \$ 300,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 2 yrs. July 2013 - June 2015

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 0

Summary:

Mini-grants for ten schools and training for 150 K-12 teachers from multiple content areas so they are prepared to implement environmental and outdoor education aligned with academic standards.

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Sponsoring Organization: Dept. of Education

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Location

Region: Statewide

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

<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

PROJECT TITLE: Integration of Environmental and Outdoor Education into K-12

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

This project will continue to fund two key recommendations identified by teachers and other citizens on an Outdoor Education Advisory Committee that submitted a report to the State Legislature in 2009 titled: Outdoor Education Legislative Report – 2009 and the work of an initial 2010 ENRTF appropriation to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to integrate environmental and outdoor education in grades 7-12. While only operating for approximately one year, the pilot project has received high interest and acknowledgement from Minnesota schools. Additional funding would allow the project to increase the quality and quantity of environmental and outdoor educational experiences provided to students in Minnesota schools. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the MDE provided oversight and support to the citizen advisory workgroup that made recommendations to the Legislature. The two agencies have collaborated on this proposal.

This project, which aims to improve academic achievement in students in grades K-12 by using the outdoors as a context for learning, has the companion goal of developing outdoor skills in students. This approach addresses current academic realities while also having a potential positive influence on outdoor recreation participation. The project will provide training for an additional 150 K-12 teachers from multiple content areas so they are able to implement environmental and outdoor education aligned with academic standards, which will directly impact thousands of students. It will also provide incentives for innovative outdoor education models through a grants program at ten schools so they can significantly enhance their environmental and outdoor education programming.

This project is a direct response to state and national trends that show declining participation in outdoor recreation. It also addresses issues identified in the previously mentioned outdoor education report to the Legislature. It is designed to address three strategic themes that the citizen outdoor education advisory committee deemed important: increasing the awareness and benefits of outdoor education, garnering resources to implement outdoor education, and successfully addressing academic relevance issues at the classroom level.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Professional Development for K-12 teachers

Budget: \$179,000

MDE will hire one full-time unclassified position (see budget item – 200,000) to coordinate the implementation of professional development that encourages environmental and outdoor education at K-12 Minnesota schools. The purpose of the professional development component is to equip teachers with the knowledge, skills and resources necessary to help students: 1) Master state and local academic standards through an environmental and outdoor education approach; and 2) Develop their outdoor skills and knowledge. Trainers consisting of licensed teachers from multiple disciplines and providers of environmental and outdoor education such as environmental learning centers, outdoor industry partners, and members of conservation and sporting organizations will continue to partner with MDE and participate in the trainings. Model units developed by teachers participating in the program will be developed and posted on SEEK, Minnesota's Directory of Environmental Education resources. Training and projects will be evaluated by a consultant to validate the achievement of participating schools.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. 100 teachers trained to integrate environmental and outdoor education	January 2015
2. 3000 students exposed to environmental and outdoor education lessons	June 2015

Activity 2: Provide Mini-grants and Training to Develop Innovative Models **Budget:** \$121,000

K-12 schools will be invited to submit proposals for the design and implementation of innovative environmental and outdoor education programs to bolster student achievement in science, physical education, language arts, social studies and/or mathematics. Funding priority will be given to programs that target traditionally underachieving or at-risk student populations and will target ten programs to receive grants averaging \$5,000 apiece and additional professional development for teachers led by MDE. Model units developed by teachers receiving grants and training will also be posted on SEEK.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. 10 schools implement environmental and outdoor education projects that enhances their capacity to deliver programs that get students outside	January 2015
2. 50 teachers at project schools trained to integrate environmental and outdoor education	January 2015
3. 40 model environmental and outdoor education lessons posted on SEEK	June 2015

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

This project will be co-led by the DNR and MDE. C.B. Bylander of the DNR and Dr. Beth Aune of MDE will provide oversight. The project coordinator position will be located at MDE and utilize technical assistance from a workgroup representing schools and the environmental and outdoor community.

B. Timeline Requirements

This project will be carried out over a two-year period. The following timeline allows the project to works with schools and teachers over most of two school years:

1. Design and announce RFP and solicit participating schools and teachers (summer 2013)
2. Select 5-10 proposals to be funded \$3,000 - \$10,000 per proposal (fall 2013)
3. Conduct initial training for grantees (winter 2013-2014)
4. Implement and monitor – provide support to grantees and others (Jan. 1, 2014 – June 1, 2015)
5. Conduct additional teacher trainings (June 15, 2014 – September 15, 2014)
6. Gather evaluations and reports of grant programs, write final project reports (June 2015)

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

This proposal represents a unique opportunity for the DNR and MDE to continue the good work started by the initial 2010 ENRTF appropriation for this project to increase the opportunity and effectiveness of environmental and outdoor education in Minnesota. Based at MDE, this project will continue to leverage opportunities to integrate environmental and outdoor education throughout Minnesota’s K-12 structure by working with MDE staff throughout the department. With continued funding, additional teachers and schools will increase their offerings for students in this area. On-going funding now and in the future for this effort will further the goals of environmental and conservation education, increase academic achievement and support a Minnesota tradition of active outdoor recreation participation.

2012-2013 Detailed Project Budget

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET Two years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel: One Environmental and Outdoor Education Coordinator, Minnesota Department of Education, 100 % full-time, 73% dollars toward salary, 27% dollars toward benefits, full two years of project	\$ 216,000
Contracts: Project Evaluator - with environmental and outdoor education program evaluation expertise to be responsible for documenting progress towards reaching project goals, including student achievement towards academic standards. Evaluator to be determined through state contracting processes.	\$ 10,000
Contracts: Mini Grants to Schools - 10 grants at \$5,000 each. Grants will be given as incentives to schools to develop innovative models and funds will be used for training and materials to enhance the school's environmental and outdoor education programming. Priority will be given to schools newly committed to this approach and those with a high percentage of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.	\$ 50,000
Contracts: Teacher Training to Schools - sub pay (\$14,000) and lodging/meals (\$5,000) for teachers at schools receiving project grants to attend MDE-led training on integrating environmental and outdoor education into academic standards.	\$ 19,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Curriculum materials, including classroom equipment and books that will support teacher efforts to integrate environmental and outdoor education.	\$ 2,000
Travel: Advisory council and teacher travel to trainings, reimbursement of mileage for those traveling over 75 miles round trip.	\$ 3,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 300,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: MDE to cover overhead for coordinator position, funded by general fund.	\$ 20,000	Secured
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): \$300,000 2010 ENRTF appropriation to MDE for project currently underway. Full 2010 appropriation expected to be spend by end of current project on June 30, 2013.	\$ 165,000	Unspent, but plans to be all used by 6/30/13
Funding History: 2010 ENRTF Appropriation	\$ 300,000	

LCCMR Project Manager Qualifications

Project Manager: Jeff Ledermann

Environmental and Outdoor Education Coordinator

Minnesota Department of Education

1500 Highway 36 West

Roseville, MN 55113-4266

Since March of 2011, Jeff Ledermann has served as coordinator at MDE of the current 2010 LCCMR ENRTF appropriation to integrate environmental and outdoor education into grades 7-12. A former high school science teacher, he majored in biology and teaching at the University of Minnesota-Morris, and he has a Master's degree from Hamline University with an emphasis in environmental education. He has worked for 20 years for the State of Minnesota developing and leading a wide range of environmental outreach and education programs, including author of the second GreenPrint, Minnesota's State Plan for Environmental Education, creator of a statewide "Buy Green Power" campaign and founder of the Eco Experience at the Minnesota State Fair in 2006. With over 1.5 million visitors, the Eco Experience has become the most attended sustainability event in the country. He also worked as a Minnesota Conservation Corps member at DNR's Farmland Wildlife Research Station and as an instructor at In-Fisherman's Camp Fish.

Jeff's interest in the environment and natural resources also extends into his personal life. He is a co-founder of the Mahtomedi Area Green Initiative and a leading force in getting their new community wind turbine built. He also started the Environmental Stewardship Team at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, advises the Mahtomedi High School Eco Club and introduces kids to the outdoors through a group he started called Fishing Daughters Club.

