

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

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 118-F

Youth-Driven Forestry Education and Service in Northeastern Minnesota

Topic Area: F. Outreach/Education/Training

Total Project Budget: \$ 236,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 yrs. July 2013 - June 2016

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 0

Summary:

Increase the protection, restoration, and sustainable management of NE MNs forests by educating youth about active management and inspiring them to engage family and community members in forest-based learning opportunities.

Name: Garrett Ous

Sponsoring Organization: Itasca County

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Grand Rapids MN 55744

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Web Address http://www.co.itasca.mn.us

Location

Region: NE

County Name: Aitkin, Beltrami, Carlton, Cass, Clearwater, Cook, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Lake of the Woods, Pine, St. Louis

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: Youth-Driven Forestry Education and Service in Northeastern Minnesota

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Northeastern Minnesota’s forests have tremendous economic, social, and environmental value. Central to their protection, restoration, and sustainable management, is an urgent need to foster and strengthen a multi-generational forestry ethic. This ethic must recognize a broad array of perspectives about the use and management of forests, but also must imply a shared understanding of the positive and negative forces that are changing them. Sustainable forestry, natural and prescribed burning, conservation easements, land fragmentation, the influx of invasive species, and climate change are just a fraction of these forces.

The Forestry Education and Awareness Program (FEAP) is an innovative and broad-based partnership formed in Itasca County in 2004 to promote comprehensive forestry education and awareness to county residents and visitors. Uniting local non-profit, educational, corporate, tribal, and governmental stakeholders as well as the MN DNR, Blandin Foundation, Nature Conservancy, and USFS, the program developed consensus on key forestry messages. These messages have been integrated into math, reading, science, and social studies curricula throughout Itasca County. They have also been delivered through widespread communications campaigns. The proposed project will build on FEAP’s success by enhancing programming and expanding it throughout NE MN’s forested counties.

Project goal: To inspire Northeastern Minnesota youth to lead an effort to increase the protection, restoration, and sustainable management of the region’s forests.

Project outcomes: • 3,000 students participate in forests in the classroom • 1,050 youth lead 3,200 community members in on-the-ground forestry education and service • 3,000 youth, educators, forest experts, and community members participate in forest summits • 200 leaders throughout NE MN learn how to reach additional 40,000 youth and adults.

The proposed project will achieve the stated goal and outcomes by inspiring youth to engage in forest-based education and service learning opportunities and to invite their fellow family and community members to participate. The Itasca County Land Department will work with a contracted consultant and FEAP partners to develop and pilot project activities in Itasca, Cass, Aitkin, and St. Louis counties and to facilitate capacity building throughout NE MN’s forested counties.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Develop and Implement Forests in the Classroom **Budget:** \$41,000

Forests in the classroom will place forest experts in 5th-grade classrooms for one day in the fall of each year. The day will integrate forest education into core curricular areas, will build excitement about forest-based learning, and will recruit participants for the subsequent education and service program and forest summit. Specific tasks will include meeting with forest stakeholders and educators to develop a locally validated forest presentation for 5th graders, training of educators and forest experts, and coordination of the events.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. 10 schools, 20 classrooms, and 650 5 th -grade students in Itasca, Cass, Aitkin, and St. Louis counties participate during first year.	Fall 2013
2. 15 schools, 30 classrooms, and 1000 5 th -grade students in Itasca, Cass, Aitkin, and St. Louis counties participate during second year.	Fall 2014
3. 20 schools, 40 classrooms, and 1,350 5 th -grade students in Itasca, Cass, Aitkin, and St. Louis counties participate during third year.	Fall 2015

Activity 2: Initiate On-the-Ground Forest Education and Service Program **Budget:** \$80,000

This project component will link forest experts, 5th-grade students, and their family or community members. Youth-led teams will initiate on-the-ground, forest-based education and/or service learning projects. Related tasks will include working with forest stakeholders and educators to

develop an educational “passport to the forest” program, working with foresters to identify needed service projects, coordinating project components, and providing training to foresters and educators.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. 250 5 th -grade students and 750 community members in Itasca, Cass, Aitkin, and St. Louis counties participate during first year.	Spring 2014
2. 350 5 th -grade students and 1050 community members in Itasca, Cass, Aitkin, and St. Louis counties participate during second year.	Spring 2015
3. 450 5 th -grade students and 1400 community members in Itasca, Cass, Aitkin, and St. Louis counties participate during third year.	Spring 2016

Activity 3: Design and Host Annual Forest Summit

Budget: \$75,000

The program capstone will be a spring event that is open to students, educators, and family and community members. Agenda will include a keynote presentation about timely forest topics, a display of completed education and service projects, a recognition and award ceremony, forest tours, recreational features, and booths/tables staffed by representatives from agencies such as Chippewa National Forest and MN DNR. Specific tasks will include event recruitment, promotion, and coordination.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. 750 students, educators, forest experts, and community members from Itasca, Cass, Aitkin, and St. Louis counties attend during first year.	Spring 2014
2. 1,000 students, educators, forest experts, and community members from Itasca, Cass, Aitkin, and St. Louis counties attend during second year.	Spring 2015
3. 1,250 students, educators, forest experts, and community members from Itasca, Cass, Aitkin, and St. Louis counties attend during third year.	Spring 2016

Activity 4: Build Capacity for Region-Wide Expansion

Budget: \$40,000

Build additional capacity for program expansion throughout forested counties in NE MN. Specific tasks will include making initial contacts through email, phone, and mail with assistance from FEAP Network Partners; seeking opportunities to present program to land commissioners, forestry affairs committees, tribes, and other stakeholders; developing starter program materials and/or templates; and providing training to educators, forest experts, and community leaders.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Deliver up to 20 presentations throughout Northeastern Minnesota.	Spring 2016
2. Provide 12 trainings around Northeastern Minnesota and train a total of 200 people about how to build community capacity for youth-led forestry education and service.	Spring 2016

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners - Itasca County will be the fiscal agent and will make in-kind contributions. Garrett Ous, Land Commissioner, will serve as project director. A bid process will be utilized to select a contracted project manager/coordinator. The manager/coordinator will receive funds via a county contract to implement and maximize results of the project. Other government and corporate partners will provide in-kind donations. They will receive no trust fund dollars.

B. Timeline Requirements - The proposed three-year project period will enable the program to achieve maximum results before promoting expansion of the program throughout Northeastern Minnesota.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs - The proposed project is an expansion of FEAP. Based on the initiative’s broad membership of regional and statewide organizations, Itasca County is working to build capacity for FEAP’s educational programming throughout Northeastern Minnesota. The county anticipates that program development and capacity building will require the most funding, with operations funding being significantly less and being provided by local governmental, non-profit, and corporate stakeholders throughout the region.

2013-2016 Detailed Project Budget for Youth-Driven Forestry Education and Service in NE MN

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET for 3 years

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Contracts: Itasca County will contract with a consulting firm for development and coordination of forests in the schools, the education and service learning project, the forest summit, and program expansion throughout NE MN. 1000 hrs yr 1 + 800 hrs yr 2 + 800 hrs yr 3 x \$55/hr = \$143,000.	\$ 143,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Materials for forests in the schools, \$3,500 yr 1 + \$1,500 yr 2 + \$2,000 yr 3 = \$7,000. Materials for education/service project, \$7,500 yr 1 + \$3,000 yr 2 + \$3,500 yr 3 = \$14,000. Supplies/materials for forest summit, \$5,000/yr x 3 yrs = \$15,000. Materials development and production for training sessions, \$9,000.	\$ 45,000
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): NA	\$ -
Travel: Bus transportation to forest summit, \$4,000 yr 1 + \$5,000 yr 2 + \$6,000 yr 3 = \$15,000. Travel to provide program trainings throughout NE MN, 6,000 miles x .5/mile = \$3,000. General travel for meetings, etc, 220 miles/mo x 12 mos x 3 yrs x .5/mile = \$4,000.	\$ 22,000
Additional Budget Items: Food/beverages for service projects, \$1,000 yr 1 + \$1,250 yr 2 + \$1,750 yr 3 = \$4,000. Design of forests in the schools presentation, \$3,000. Development of web portal/app for forest program, \$13,000. Meeting space and expenses for training sessions, 12 sessions x \$500 each = \$6,000.	\$ 26,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 236,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Ongoing operation of FEAP programming and coordination will be funded through a cash match from Itasca County, \$25,000 x 3 yrs = \$75,000. Grant from Blandin Foundation to enhance FEAP programming throughout Northeastern Minnesota, \$50,000.	\$ 125,000	Pending
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:	\$ -	
In-kind Services During Project Period: Project manager's time to provide project administration, project direction, and participate in regional expansion, provided by Itasca County, \$50/hr x 180 hrs/yr x 3 yrs = \$27,000. Foresters, loggers, and other professionals in classrooms, assisting in materials development, leading service projects, and volunteering at forest summit, in-kind match of \$50/hr x 700 hrs/yr x 3 yrs = \$105,000. Tools and supplies for service learning projects, donated by FEAP partners, 30 projects/yr x \$500 x 3 yrs = \$45,000.	\$ 177,000	Secured
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): NA	\$ -	NA
Funding History: From Itasca County for FEAP programming, 2004 to 2013, \$25,000/yr = \$200,000.	\$ 200,000	



Youth-Driven Forestry Education and Service in Northeastern Minnesota

GOAL: TO INSPIRE NORTHEASTERN MINNESOTA YOUTH TO LEAD AN EFFORT TO INCREASE THE PROTECTION, RESTORATION, AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE REGION'S FORESTS.

Inputs

ITASCA COUNTY
Cash and In-Kind
\$102,000

BLANDIN FOUNDATION
Grant
\$50,000

FEAP PARTNERS
In-Kind
\$150,000

LCCMR
Grant
\$218,000

Activities

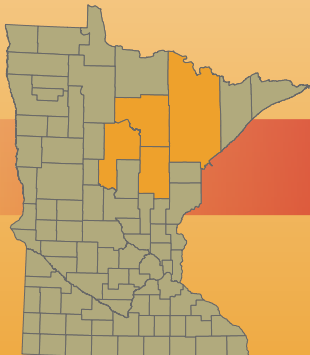
- Forests in the classroom
- On-the-ground forest education and service
- Annual forest summit
- Region-wide expansion

Outcomes

- 3,000 students participate in forests in the classroom.
- 1,050 youth lead 3,200 community members in on-the-ground forestry education and service.
- 3,000 youth, educators, forest experts, and community members participate in forest summits.
- 200 leaders throughout NE MN learn how to reach additional 40,000 youth and adults.

Pilot area

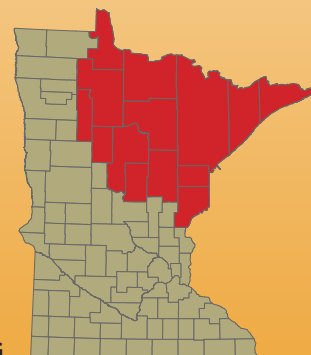
- COUNTIES:**
- AITKIN
 - CASS
 - ITASCA
 - ST. LOUIS



Target expansion

- COUNTIES:**
- AITKIN
 - CASS
 - ITASCA
 - ST. LOUIS

- PLUS:**
- BELTRAMI
 - CARLTON
 - CLEARWATER
 - COOK
 - CROW WING
 - HUBBARD
 - KOOCHICHING
 - LAKE
 - LAKE OF THE WOODS
 - PINE



Youth-Driven Forestry Education and Service in Northeastern Minnesota

Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description

Project Manager Garrett Ous has been the Itasca County Land Commissioner since 1995. Prior to his work in Itasca County, Ous worked for the Clearwater County Land Department for 12 years, four as a forester and eight as the land commissioner. Ous attended Utah State University and graduated with a bachelor of science in forestry. As manager of the proposed project, Ous will oversee administration of the project and will serve as the liaison between the Itasca County Board of Commissioners, contracted service providers, and program partners. In addition, he will monitor progress, seek out continued funding, support program content and public outreach efforts, and contribute to presentations about the program.

Itasca County first became actively involved in forestry education when the Itasca County Board of Commissioners directed Land Commissioner Ous to develop a forestry education project in 2004. Their reasons for doing so were three-fold. For one, local forests were facing increasing demands, and it was critical to increase education and awareness about the forests where people worked, lived, and recreated. For another, there was a need to increase public trust in the active management of forests. Finally, in order to effectively reach youth, there was a need to bridge the gap between practicing professionals' knowledge of forests and teachers' knowledge of education and students.

As partners in the Forestry Education and Awareness Program (FEAP) began meeting, they worked to define the shared values and key messages of the organization. The values were described as the diverse use of forests that include a balanced system of social, economic, and environmental components for the joint benefit of all citizens locally and beyond. The key messages were defined in over-arching categories including forestry concepts; economics, business, and forest management; environment, wildlife, and conservation; society and recreation; and practical forestry applications. Primarily, FEAP has shared these values and messages by developing a network of forest stakeholders, by developing a network of educators, and then connecting professionals' knowledge of forests with teacher's knowledge of core subject areas including math, science, reading, communications, and social studies.

Since its founding, FEAP has documented a number of significant achievements. One local elementary school adopted the key messages throughout their school, obtained a grant to provide related professional development, and obtained a school forest designation. Another school created a key-message-based "Intro to Forestry" course that meets high school science standards and is supported by network partners through grants, forest tours, guest speakers, and team teaching. This small school has a high population of Native American students, and more than more than 70 students registered for the class in its first year. In a large, neighboring school district, program posters hang in all 275 classrooms. Additionally, the key messages are embedded district-wide in the 4th-grade science curriculum. The high school in this district has also embedded the key messages in forestry courses, and because of a recent articulation agreement with a local community college, students taking these classes can receive college credit. FEAP also reaches out to the general public through ongoing strategic marketing campaigns. It is estimated that the most recently developed campaign reached 25,000 residents and visitors.

Because of the demonstrated capacity of FEAP to reach youth and community members with targeted forestry messages, Itasca County is committed to its continued growth, both at home, in surrounding counties, and throughout Northeastern Minnesota.