

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

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**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 121-F**

Phyllis Wheatley Environmental Explorers

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

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**Total Project Budget:** \$ 90,000

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

**Other Non-State Funds:** \$ 10,000

**Summary:**

Youth become confident environmental stewards by developing positive environmental values and a sense of responsibility as they connect to their world through experiences in the natural environment within their neighborhood.

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**Location**

**Region:** Metro

**County Name:** Hennepin

**City / Township:** Minneapolis (Near North)

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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

## PROJECT TITLE: Environmental Explorers

### I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Environmental Explorers is a year-long project engaging K-8 grade youth from North Minneapolis' Heritage Park neighborhood in multi-disciplinary environmental programming utilizing community collaboration and topical expertise. Youth will participate in hands-on, experiential learning, after-school and summer programming, building greater awareness and appreciation while implementing environmental projects to benefit their families and neighborhood.

Many youth in the neighborhood spend a significant amount of their free time indoors. Also, when asked about career aspirations, environment and natural resources related careers rarely get mentioned. The Environmental Explorers project engages youth through trusted relationships to explore and discover the amazing natural world in their own back yards and beyond, as well as introducing them to issues and opportunities through connections with topic experts and professionals. Taking classroom learning into the field is an essential part of feeling connected to the natural world.

**Project Goal:** Youth will become confident environmental stewards by developing positive environmental values and a sense of responsibility as they create connections to their world through direct experience with environmental education and the surrounding natural environment within their neighborhood.

**Objective #1:** Youth will be engaged in high quality out of school time environmental exploration and gain awareness, understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of their environment through scientific inquiry.

**Objective #2:** Youth will develop awareness around the power of youth voice, their personal leadership skills, and confidence through self identified learning projects related to the environment.

**Objective #3:** Youth will develop a greater sense of personal responsibility for their environment and advocate positive environmental values within their family and community.

### II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

#### Objective #1:

1. Eight week multidisciplinary program from mid-June to mid-August 10th for 70 youth. Activities will include:
  - a. Outdoor Environmental Exploration through scientific inquiry utilizing Sumner Field, the surrounding wet lands, Bassett Creek, and rain gardens as learning laboratories. Youth will use the principles of scientific inquiry to explore neighborhood ecosystems, water quality, life cycles and personal ecological impact.
  - b. ECO Art, art exploration using recycled materials and photography to capture the natural environment in the neighborhood
  - c. ECO Education, ECO Career Exploration, and Green Entrepreneurship, where youth will be exposed to environmentally related post secondary education options, explore a variety of ECO careers, develop and market their own 'green' business.
  - d. Community Youth Gardening, where youth will participate in hands-on organic gardening, composting, cooking nutrition meals utilizing vegetables grown, while learning about where food comes from and sustainable agricultural practices

**Objective #2:**

1. Youth ages 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be given the opportunity to present a self identified project on an environmental sciences topic at the MN State Fair that furthers the knowledge gained during the summer program. This presentation will provide an opportunity for the youth to share their learning with their family and greater community.
2. Quarterly 10 week in-depth study of a youth identified environmental science topic for 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade youth. This evening enrichment class will take place twice weekly in the fall and allow the youth to further explore an environmental science topic of their choosing in greater depth. This course will utilize a content specialist and college students from the University of MN to be guest presenters and build relationships with the youth throughout their learning process.
3. Weekly “Science Hour” for youth in Kindergarten through 3rd grade will be incorporated into an existing Homework Help session. The “Science Hour” time will focus on different hands on activities related to the environment.

**Objective #3:**

1. Four citizen science service learning projects throughout the 8 week summer program. These service learning activities will be connected to the topic areas the youth are learning about throughout the program. At least 2 of these service learning projects will engage the HP neighborhood, providing an opportunity for intergenerational sharing and experiences.
2. A youth led service project that engages the neighborhood on Earth Day. This service project will be developed by the youth throughout the 2 in-depth courses, with the help and support of the content specialist, University of Minnesota student volunteers, and Teen Assistants.
3. Teens will participate in 2 outdoor adventure experiences, serving as a catalyst for growth in leadership and love for the environment.
4. Youth and their families will participate in an outdoor adventure experience to ignite a passion for the natural world led by the Red Wing Environmental Learning Center.
5. Five Family Engagement and Training Nights will be held throughout this project to share with parents the lessons and concepts their children are learning through the program. These engagement nights will not only educate the family system, but provide an opportunity for parents and their children to work together on a related project.

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY****A. Project Team/Partners**

In the fall of 2010, Phyllis Wheatley Community Center, Urban Strategies Inc. at Heritage Park, and Urban 4-H, came together as the Heritage Park Collaboration to develop collaborative ways to increase STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and environmental education learning opportunities for youth in the Heritage Park neighborhood. Additional partners for proposed project includes Zahanati Youth Farm, Hennepin County Master Gardeners, Hennepin County Environmental Services and others.

**B. Timeline Requirements**

Project is based on a one year program cycle with seasonal topics and activities.

**C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs**

Environmental Explorers is a project of the Dream, Explore Connect! (DEC) program at Phyllis Wheatley Community Center. DEC is supported by grants from corporate and private foundations, businesses and individuals.

## 2012-2013 Detailed Project Budget

*Phyllis Wheatley Community Center - Environmental Explorers Project*

### IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET - two years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>2 Year AMOUNT</u>
<b>Personnel:</b> 76% Salary/24% Taxes & Benefits	
1 Youth Enrichment Coordinator - Summer: 12 wks x 30hrs/wk x \$15.75	11,340
1 Youth Enrichment Coordinator - School Year: 26 wks x 10hrs/wk x \$15.75	8,190
1 Youth Enrichment Specialist - Summer: 11 wks x 30 hrs/wk x \$12.00/hr	7,920
3 Content Specialist - Summer: 10 hrs/wk x 12 wks x \$15/hour	10,800
1 Content Specialist - School Year: 10 hrs/wk x 26 wks x \$15/hour	3,900
2 Teen Assistants - Summer: 25 hrs/wk x 9 wks x \$7.25/hour	3,263
2 Teen Assistants - School Year: 10 hrs/wk x 21 wks x \$7.25	3,045
<b>Contracts:</b> N/A	\$ -
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b>	\$ 8,600
<b>Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):</b> N/A	\$ -
<b>Travel:</b> Bus for field trips - Regional Parks, Environmental Learning Center, etc.	\$ 12,000
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b> Tuitons for ELC visit, Wilderness Inquiry Mississippi River trip, etc.	9,000
Cost of space use - occupancy	10,500
Volunteer stipends	5,200
Accountability/Evaluation	15,900
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =</b>	<b>\$ 98,858</b>

### V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
<b>Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>		
Carolyn Foundation	10,000	<i>Secured</i>
James R. Thorpe Foundation	5,000	<i>Pending</i>
<b>Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>	\$ -	N/A
NONE		
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period:</b>		N/A
Volunteer instructors/content experts 160 hours annually at \$21.16/hr (value determined by Independent Sector)	3,385	
<b>Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable):</b>	\$ -	N/A
N/A		
<b>Funding History:</b>		
Greater Twin Cities United Way 2011	48,000	Secured
Hennepin County Environmental Services 2012	45,000	Secured

## **Key Project Personnel**

### Project Manager:

Elana Dahlberg, PWCC Youth Enrichment Coordinator, will supervise youth programming at PWCC while managing content specialists, teens, and volunteers on-site. She is an experienced and trained youth development coordinator that manages the Dream, Explore, Connect! program and has worked with youth for five years. This position is contingent on funding from this grant.

Elana has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Macalester College in St. Paul, MN; double majoring in Geography and Anthropology. Prior to her current position as Youth Enrichment Coordinator, Elana was an Americorps Promise Fellow from 2009 -2010 at Phyllis Wheatley. Her ability to grow the out-of-school-time program with youth led to her current position overseeing the Dream, Explore, Connect! program. Additional experiences she brings to the job include working as a tutor and mentor for inner city youth at Neighborhood House in St. Paul from 2007-2009.

### Project Team:

Alecia Leonard, US Community Liaison at Heritage Park, will manage youth programming at Heritage Park site while supervising the HP Summer Youth Coordinator, Teen Assistants, and on-site volunteers. She has 4 years experience working within youth development. She has 1 ½ years experience with program development and community outreach specifically in the Heritage Park neighborhood. We are not seeking funding for this position.

Amie Mondl, Urban 4-H Program Coordinator, will provide program development expertise, and lead the training of Content Specialists and volunteers for the Environmental Explorers program. We are not seeking funding for this position.

Jessica Jerney, Urban 4-H Program Coordinator, will provide support to the Environmental Explorers program in the areas of training, monitoring and evaluation. We are not seeking funding for this position.

## **Phyllis Wheatley Community Center**

Phyllis Wheatley Community Center, established in 1924, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has served over 200,000 youth and families. It is one of the oldest organizations in Minnesota to continuously deliver services primarily to African Americans. “The Wheatley” opened as a settlement house and was a central gathering place for the city’s African American community, playing a historic role in this community during an era of racial segregation and discrimination. Historically, activities of the Center focused on recreation, education, music and dramatics.

Phyllis Wheatley Community Center is co-located on a single campus adjacent to Bethune Community School at Bethune Park. Programs operate from a community and family strengths model with a philosophy that community-based, culturally relevant programs are most effective in assisting communities of color: wholeness and strength in each family member is supported; and the needs of each family member is considered in goal setting and outcome assessment.

