

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2014 Request for Proposals (RFP)

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Project Title:

Eco Educations Environmental Service-Learning Program

Category: C. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ 90,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 1 Year, July 2014 - June 2015

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 0

Summary:

Eco Education will train, support and mentor teachers to implement an environmental service-learning curriculum that will allow students to complete action projects and address environmental issues to improve their communities.

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Sponsoring Organization: Eco Education

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Web Address: www.ecoeducation.org

Location

Region: Metro

County Name: Hennepin, Ramsey

City / Township:

MP:

Budget:

Qual:

Map:

Resolution:

List:

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge
Base			
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ Employment	_____ TOTAL



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2014 Main Proposal

Project Title: *Eco Education's Environmental Service-Learning Program*

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Eco Education's program The Living Classroom (TLC) is an environmental service-learning curriculum that provides students with the knowledge and skills to identify and address environmental issues in their own communities (e.g. watershed management, food access, climate change, pollution, etc.). The overall goals a TLC project include:

- **STUDENT GOAL:** Implement of *The Living Classroom* curriculum in nine middle school and high schools throughout the metro area (3 Minneapolis, 3 St. Paul, 3 inner-ring suburban); impacting over 500 students and culminating in the implementation of 18 or more student-led environmental service-learning action projects.
- **TEACHER GOAL:** Train, support and coach teachers on environmental service-learning and improve teacher knowledge and awareness about experiential environmental education; impacting over 60 middle school and high school teachers/educators.

The unique approach for this grant will be to use the cohort of nine participating schools and teachers as a way to further enrich their environmental knowledge across their differences – geographic, racial and socio-economic differences. Our TLC curriculum (formerly Urban Stewards) is a time-tested curriculum that has been used by Eco Education for over 20 years. By learning about environmental issues a service-learning framework, students understand about how issues of land use, health, economic and community development connect to their own environmental responsibility. *TLC* is directly aligned with Minnesota State Academic Standards.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Recruit & Train Teachers to Implement TLC

Budget: \$15,000

Recruit individual teachers and gain commitment from school administration. Conduct teacher orientation and training via an intensive, interactive professional development workshop for the teacher cohort on The Living Classroom.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Recruit and train 9-member teacher cohort (one from each school; 3 Minneapolis, 3 St. Paul, and 3 suburban).	September 1, 2014
2. Confirm commitment/contract with teachers and with school administration to implement TLC.	September 1, 2014

Activity 2: Program/Curriculum Implementation

Budget: \$50,000

Implement *The Living Classroom* curriculum in partnering schools. Eco Education staff will support this implementation with teachers and students throughout each unit of the curriculum.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Implement in all partnering schools.	May 1, 2014
2. Completion of 18 (min.) student-led action projects.	May 1, 2014
3. Create community awareness of student-led action projects.	June 1, 2014
4. Conduct teacher and student evaluation.	June 1, 2014

Activity 3: Mid-Project Checkpoint & Teacher Workshop

Budget: \$10,000



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Hold professional development workshop and “skill share” sessions for teacher cohort including instruction and resources on specific environmental issues (e.g. water, energy, food; topics will be driven by what students have selected during issue investigation phase), and discussion on solutions, successes and challenges teachers have faced during TLC process to-date.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Gather feedback on what topics to focus on (e.g. are students gravitating toward watershed management, energy, climate change, etc.)	December 1, 2014
2. Conduct winter professional development workshop and skill share.	January 15, 2015
3. Strengthen connection between cohort members and troubleshoot any issues/questions that have developed in first half of TLC implementation.	January 30, 2015

Activity 4: Student Project Showcase & Celebration

Budget: \$15,000

Spring celebration and end-of-year project showcase and celebration (students will use video, photography, presentation, or other media to present their projects). Students will also be encouraged to share/discuss how they will cultivate sustainable lifestyles as a result of participating in The Living Classroom program. Gather program evaluation and feedback from teachers.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Hold student project showcase and celebration event for 500 students.	June 1, 2015
2. Create community awareness about student-led action projects.	June 1, 2015
3. Gather program evaluation and feedback from 12 teacher cohort members.	June 1, 2015

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Project Team:

Elise Griffin: Eco Education Program Advisor and Project Manager (1.0 FTE), (ENRTF funding requested)

New Program Staff TBD: Eco Education Program Advisor (1.0 FTE), (ENRTF funding requested)

Sara Bischoff: Eco Education Communication & Development Mgr; will serve as project coordinator for the grant. (1.0 FTE - .5 already funded, .5 ENRTF funding requested)

Project Partners:

Eco Education’s partnerships develop around issues chosen by students (e.g. if students pursue a rain garden project, we would partner with Metro Blooms who are rain garden specialists as a resource). Partners may include individuals, community partners, environmental organizations and local government who work to address environmental issues in the Twin Cities.

B. Timeline Requirements

The project timeline is one-year long and is based on the 2014-15 school year.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

Our long-term strategy for the proposed project is to continue to use this process to implement TLC in each partnering school, with the goal of expanding and adding two (2) new school partnerships/contracts each year.

2014 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Eco Education's Environmental Service-Learning Program

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET *One year*

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u> (See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses", p. 13)	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel: Project Manager, 1.0 FTE , 100% toward salary for grant award period July 2014-July 2015	\$ 40,000
Personnel: Program Advisor, 1.0 FTE , 100% toward salary for grant award period July 2014-July 2015	40,000
Contracts: Community Partners (tbd) to add expertise to workshops and teacher training.	\$ 10,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	\$ -
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):	\$ -
Travel: <i>Be specific. Generally, only in-state travel essential to completing project activities can be included.</i>	\$ -
Additional Budget Items: <i>In this column, list any additional budget items that do not fit above categories. List by item(s) or item type(s) and explain how number was reached. One row per type/category.</i>	\$ -
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 90,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: <i>Grants from Private Family Foundations (pending approval)</i>	\$ 42,000	<i>Pending</i>
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:	\$ -	
In-kind Services During Project Period: <i>Staff Benefits</i>	\$ 7,200	<i>Secured</i>
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): N/A	\$ -	<i>N/A</i>
Funding History:	\$ -	

It's More Than a Nature Hike...

ECO EDUCATION'S ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE-LEARNING PROCESS

4. ACTION!

With viable solutions to implement, the students are now ready to take action! Most action projects need resources in order to be fully implemented. Students are given the tools and coaching to write a mini-grant explaining in detail each of the steps that have led them to the design of their action project. Then, they present their grant proposal to a panel of Eco Education staff and Youth Advisory Board Members, school administrators, and community partners.

1. COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Students begin the process by defining what community means to them and what equity means in their community. They collect information about the needs in their community through survey research, direct observation and interviews with community partners. At Valley View Middle School in Edina, MN, students conducted a walking tour of their school campus and noted the trash on the ground, the lack of sufficient recycling bins, the impact of salt and ice on the roads, animal habitation, storm water runoff, and graffiti.

2. ISSUE INVESTIGATION

Next, students learn to differentiate a problem from an issue, and look at issues from multiple perspectives. At Anwatin Middle School in Minneapolis, MN students recognized that poor water quality was a problem, but the cause of poor water quality was the issue. Community partners from the local watershed district came into the class to speak about impervious surfaces and students watched the film "Tapped", an inspiring documentary that looks at whether clean drinking water is a basic human right or a commodity.

3. SOLUTIONS ANALYSIS

Armed with more information about an identified issue, students are ready to assess patterns and relationships with this new information and determine a solution to the issue. Their solutions might come in the form of advocacy, education and/or direct action. Students at El Colegio Charter School in Minneapolis, MN addressed the issue of poor water quality by creating presentations and YouTube videos to teach their peers about tap and bottled water. Meanwhile, students at Anthony Middle School in Minneapolis, MN addressed the same issue by working with the school administration and school engineering staff to develop a plan for installation of a large rain garden to reduce storm water runoff.

Here are some of the projects students are hoping to implement this year:

- bike share program
- chicken coop on campus
- neighborhood park clean-up
- park bench installation
- bike community awareness event
- outdoor shade garden
- vegetable garden

We need YOUR help to make these projects happen!



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)
2014 Project Manager Qualifications and Organizational Description
Project Title: *Eco Education's Environmental Service-Learning Program*

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Eco Education is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization based in St. Paul. Eco Education's mission is to inspire co-learning between youth and adults that transforms their relationship with the environment and each other. Our unique model of programming explores the intersection of environment education and equity issues. Through innovative and culturally relevant programs, we offer afterschool and summer school experiences as well as environmental education curriculum that can be integrated into middle school and high school classrooms. Our work over the past 21 years has sparked students to improve their academic performance, civic engagement and environmental stewardship.

Project Manager:

Elise Griffin, Program Advisor and Youth Board Coordinator

Summary of Qualifications:

Elise has worked for Eco Education since 2010. As a graduate from Macalester College, Elise received her bachelor's degree in biology with a concentration in international issues and a minor in environmental studies. Elise has studied black bear behavior and migration in Ely, Minnesota, worked hard building trails in the Alaskan wilderness, and served as the Environmental Justice Coordinator and Bike Share Program Coordinator of Macalester College. Her environmental journey began when she studied abroad in Tibet, Nepal, and India on a Himalayan Studies Program. While she was there she lived with Tibetan refugees, researched climate change in the Himalayas, and spent her time talking to some of the first communities to experience the devastating floods, droughts, and erosion caused by global warming.

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