

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

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 071-C

Youth-led Sustainability Initiatives in 40 Greater MN Communities

Category: C. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ 397,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 2 Years, July 2014 - June 2016

Summary:

40 Youth Energy Summit (YES!) teams will complete over 100 youth-led sustainability action projects in 40 communities in SW SE, Central and NE Minnesota, providing valuable service and gaining valuable experience.

Name: Dave Pederson

Sponsoring Organization: Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center

Address: 12718 10th Street NE
Spicer MN 56288

Telephone Number: (320) 354-5894

Email d.pederson@tds.net

Web Address www.prairiewoodselc.org/

Location

Region: Central, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest

County Name: Atkin, Benton, Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Carlton, Cass, Chippewa, Cook, Cottonwood, Crow Wing, Douglas, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Grant, Houston, Itasca, Jackson, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, Koochiching, Lac qui Parle, Lake, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, McLeod, Mower, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Olmsted

City / Township:

_____ 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: Youth-led Sustainability Initiatives in 40 Greater MN Communities
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PROJECT TITLE: Youth-led Sustainability Initiatives in 40 Greater MN Communities

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The Youth Energy Summit (YES!) mobilizes entire communities through youth-led sustainability action projects initiated by local teams of 8-20 youth in grades 7-12. Over the past six years YES! has expanded from 8 teams in southwest and west central Minnesota to 32 teams in the lower half of the state. The current proposal is to expand a successful model to mobilize 40 YES! teams including up to 8 communities in NE Minnesota during 2014-16.

YES! engages tomorrow's leaders in seeking sustainable solutions to today's environmental and economic challenges through youth-led energy conservation, waste reduction, renewable energy installations and other environmental stewardship projects. Examples of YES! outcomes include: The Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City YES! team raised over 2,000 pounds of fresh produce for school lunches, reduced their school's annual electricity costs by \$5,000; Royalton established a waste oil recovery site reducing contamination while generating revenue for future sustainability projects; Litchfield YES! collected over 30,000 lbs of electronic waste, established a school greenhouse and installed solar air heating panels. YES! projects have generated volunteer, in-kind and cash investments in sustainability projects far exceeding the total ENRTF funds invested in the project for 2011-2013.

Specific goals for YES! Project 2014-16:

- *40 YES! teams mobilize over 30,000 volunteer hours per year to complete over 100 youth-led sustainability projects providing long term environmental and economic benefits for 40 MN communities.
- *40 YES! teams engage & educate over 40,000 students (k-12), 50,000 community members & over 500 businesses through YES! sustainable living projects and educational events.
- *Expand the YES! model to include 8 teams in NE Minnesota and pilot 5 teams with students in younger grades.
- *Transition established YES! teams from grant funds to local public and private sector partnerships.

ENRTF funding will support coordinator involvement with teams, help cover team expenses for attendance at workshops and tours, and provide matching funds to complete sustainability projects.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Recruitment and retention of 40 YES! teams in SW, SE, Central and NE Minnesota	Budget: \$ 21,500
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YES! Coordinators secure coaches and confirm participation of existing teams for 2014-16 and recruit new teams as needed to fill vacancies in four regions of the state. YES! staff will work to train and mentor the Northeast Region Coordinator to ensure success in development of that region. Each region, comprised of approximately 10, teams will be served by a .5 FTE Coordinator.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Recruit and retain up to 8 YES! teams in NE region, train and mentor staff	Nov.2014, 2015
2. Recruit and retain 32 teams in central, west central, southwestern, southern and southeastern regions for grades 7 - 12	Nov. 2014 & 2015
3. Identify up to 5 existing schools to add a team at the middle school - providing a platform for YES! to be established at a younger age	Oct. 2014 & 2015

Activity 2: Workshops, Tours & Educational events to help students & coaches to learn from local experts, network with each other and connect with sustainability project partners.	Budget: \$35,500
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YES! coordinators organize 6-10 tours and workshops, per year, specific to team interests and goals. Topics include: composting, recycling, renewable energy, cafeteria waste reduction, visits to solar and wind farms, local foods initiatives, etc. Each team is typically able to participate in 1-2 workshops or tours per year.

Outcomes	Completion Date
1. 600 Team members attend YES! Workshops & tours- (held fall & winter each year)	March 2015,16
2. Students gain connections with experts and allies who can assist them with completing sustainability projects in their communities	Jan. 2015, 2016
3. Partnerships identified for on-going support of energy projects	On-going

Activity 3: Complete 100+ Sustainability Projects in over 40 Communities in SW, SE, Central and NE MN.	Budget: \$340,000
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YES! teams assess needs in their community and school, evaluate resources needed to meet the need, create an action plan and implement their projects with the support of their adult coach, YES! staff and community experts. Projects include: energy efficiency upgrades, energy audits, waste reduction, composting, recycling, hydration stations, renewable energy installations, school gardens, educational events for k-12, and community events to promote sustainable living practices. Students provide valuable service while gaining valuable experience.

Outcomes	Completion Date
1. Teams identify sustainability issues in their community and formulate action plans	Oct. 2014,15
2. 50 sustainability projects are completed each year. YES! teams receive seed funds to help reimburse projects having community cash or in-kind match	May, 2015 & 2016
3. YES! teams provide over 30,000 volunteer hours per year to complete projects and educational events which will engage & educate over 40,000 students (k-12), 50,000 community members & over 500 businesses in two years	May 2015 & 2016
4. Project accomplishments are recognized and publicized via website, newsletters, conference presentations and news media	May, 2015 & 2016

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Key project partners receiving funding from this proposal include Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, the Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability and the Laurentian Environmental Learning Center as well as 40 schools with participating YES! teams. Prairie Woods ELC will serve as the fiscal host for this grant with IRPS or Laurentian ELC providing contract services. Other contributing partners, not receiving ENRTF funds include: YES! co-founder Southwest Initiative Foundation, CERTs, Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, UofM Extension Services, electric power cooperatives, waste management services and many other private and public sector organizations and individuals.

B. Timeline Requirements: July 1, 2014 to August 1, 2016

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

The long-term strategy for YES! is to continue to improve the program, expand our network of partners and welcome other regions of the state who want to mobilize their youth to contribute to the long term vitality of the environment and economy of Minnesota. Over the next two years we will assist established teams with a transition from grant funds to local support and revenue generation, and seek grant funds and partnerships to assist with the development of new teams.

2014 Detailed Project Budget				
Youth-led Sustainability Initiatives in 40 Greater MN Communities				
IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 2years (2014-2016)				
<u>BUDGET ITEM</u> (See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses", p. 13)	<u>AMOUNT</u>			
Personnel: 1.0 FTE Project Leader (new team training and development, program sustainability, grant management and direct service to regional teams) @ \$92,000 total for 2 years, 1.5 FTE for team coordinators @ \$138,000 total for 24 months. (1) .5 FTE Coordinator assigned to each of three regions x \$23,000/yr. Each coordinator facilitates approx. 10 teams in a geographical region.	\$	230,000		
Contracts: Iron Range Sustainability Partnership/Laurentian ELC for .5 NE Region coordinator @ \$46,000 total for 24 months. Laurentian ELC to serve as fiscal host for contract.	\$	46,000		
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: 4 Thermal image scanners (1 per cohort) @ \$500/ea. Scanners will be used for mini audits for school and community buildings.	\$	2,000		
Travel: 2,500 miles per month total for 5 staff x 24 months = 60,000 x .555 = \$33,300 plus \$5700 total for 5 persons for travel meal allowance. Travel required to meet with teams and coordinate activities in rural regions.	\$	39,000		
Additional Budget Items: Coach/District Allowance; Allow for team reimbursements for substitute teachers and transportation costs to attend YES! events and tours. \$500 per team x 40 teams x 2 yrs = \$40,000	\$	40,000		
Other: Project Seed funds; Allow teams to purchase materials and services needed to start projects. \$500 per team x 40 teams x 2 years = \$40,000. Teams will be expected to provide local match of cash or in-kind. Other project funds provided by Initiative Foundations and other public and private sector partners have historically matched or exceeded ENRTF funds.	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000		
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST				
=	\$	397,000		
V. OTHER FUNDS				
<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>		
Other non-State: Initiative Foundation \$10,000 total for 2 years - West-central Initiative \$3,000 total for 2 years, Southwest Initiative Foundation \$25,000 total for 2 years. Financial commitments are being sought by Iron Range Partnerships for Sustainability from IRRRB, Northeast Regional Partnership for Sustainable Development, and private sector partners for approx. \$40,000 total for 2 years. We will know final contribution by fall 2013.	\$78,000 (based on previous experience)	\$20,000 secured. \$58,000 Pending		
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:	\$ -			
In-kind Services: Adult expert volunteer in-kind is estimated at approx. \$100,000 per year for a total of \$200,000 (based on previous years) and \$36,000 total SWIF for 2 years, 12,000 PWELC 2 yrs.	\$ 248,000	Pending (conservative estimate based on history)		
Remaining \$ from current ENRTF Appropriation is expected to be 0 by July 1, 2014. 2011 appropriation was \$246,000 from M.L. 2011, First Special Session, Chp. 2, Art.3, SE.2, Subd. 08a	\$ -			
Funding History: Southwest Initiative Foundation \$278,657, Minnesota Renewable Energy Marketplace = \$202,000, McKnight Foundation = \$75,000 AgStar \$25,000, Southern MN Initiative Foundation = \$33,530, SW Private Industry Council \$7,500, GRE \$2,500, CEE = \$1,500, Prairie Ecology Bus \$1,500 and \$2,670 from other contributors. ENRTF 2011-13 \$246,000	\$875,000	spent		
Team Fees; 40 teams will pay \$400 each year for participation.	\$32,000	Pending		

Notes:

Student volunteer time will exceed 30,000 hrs/year = very real contribution not shown in this calculation



www.youthenergysummit.org

Project Title: Youth-led Sustainability Initiatives in 40 Greater MN Communities

Projects range from recycling 30,000 lbs of e-waste to reducing utility bills by \$5,000, cutting school lunch waste by 75%, growing thousands of pounds of produce for school lunches, designing and building a vehicle that can achieve 500 miles per gallon, and decreasing school recycling contamination rates from 70% to 5%.

"You can think about saving energy or you can talk about it, but really you need to get out and do something to protect the environment. I think YES! is a great way to do that"

Kennedy YES! student

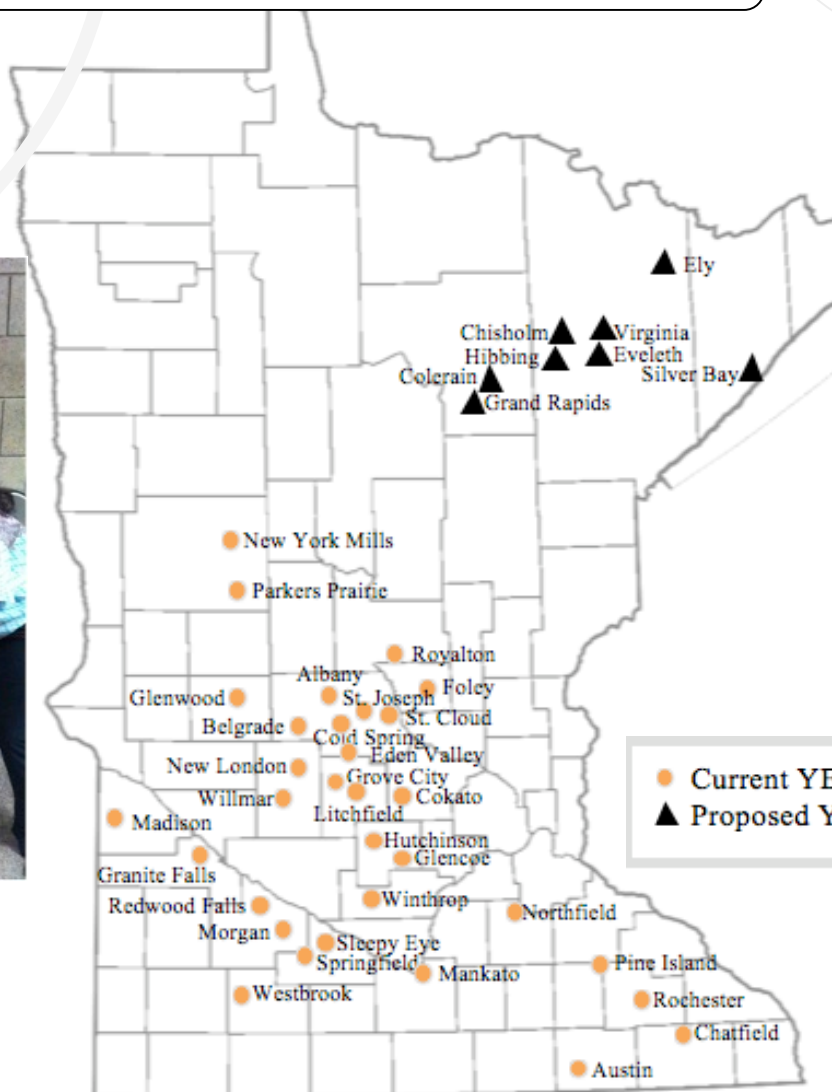


Since 2007, YES! has engaged more than 1,500 students, 1,300 businesses and organizations, and 80,000 community members



"YES! is the gift that keeps on giving because it connected us with the people and resources we need to get things done!"

YES! coach



YES! won the Minnesota Environmental Initiative Award in Environmental Education in 2010 and 2013!



"Youth are going to be the people to make the change"

YES! student

07/25/2013

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YES! is a program partnership between Southwest Initiative Foundation, Prairie Woods ELC, Laurentian ELC, and Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability.

2014-2016 ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

PROJECT TITLE: YES! (2.0) 40 + Youth-led Sustainability Action Projects in Greater MN

Organization Description:

Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center (PWELC) is a regional center for environmental education and outdoor recreation located 11 miles north of Willmar, MN in Kandiyohi County. The mission of Prairie Woods is to promote an individual and shared commitment to the responsible use, management and preservation of our natural resources. PWELC began offering programs in 1995 and now serves over 22,000 people annually from over 60 schools and many youth organizations and conservation groups within a 100 mile radius.

PWELC is a 501c3 non-profit organization, with an annual budget of approximately \$480,000, which operates day-use and outreach programs from a beautiful 500 acre facility owned by Kandiyohi County. PWELC enjoys strong partnerships with local and state government agencies, schools districts, camps, youth service agencies, conservation groups, initiative foundations and private businesses throughout the region.

PWELC has been recognized by CERTs as a leader in renewable energy in west central Minnesota and has operated with 100% net renewable energy since 2010. Since 2007, PWELC has expanded its outreach capacity through the Youth Energy Summit (YES!) and Project Eco-Voyageur. PWELC's outreach programs provide unique learning and service experiences to students within their own communities. Eco-Voyageur, focusing on water quality and conservation, introduces students to local lakes or rivers from the seats of a 34 foot voyageur canoe. The YES! program expanded to serve 30 communities in 2011-2013 with the assistance of an ENRTF grant and received recognition as the outstanding environmental education initiative in 2010 and 2013 from the Minnesota Environmental Initiative.

Project Manager Qualifications:

Shelli-Kae S. Foster serves as YES! Grant Project Manager and coordinator for YES! teams in central Minnesota. She has a master of business administration (MBA) in sustainable business and undergraduate degree in communications from Gustavus Adolphus College. For the last 2 years Foster has managed the grant reporting to the DNR and provided Status Updates to LCCMR along with processing payments to teams and contract services. As coordinator, Foster developed the central region to include 10 teams. In addition, she works closely with YES! staff and teams, organizes YES! events, and communicates regularly with coaches and students to ensure they have the resources need for success in their projects.

Previous to working with Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center and the YES! program, Foster worked as Energy Manager for School District 201/Alexandria, MN, managed the Green Team at Tastefully Simple, Inc and produced environmental programming for Twin Cities Public Television.