

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

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 084-C

Minnesota River Basin Water Quality Success Stories

Category: C. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ 135,871

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

Summary:

Lessons learned from eight successful subwatershed-scale conservation efforts will be summarized and disseminated to help inform and influence future watershed protection efforts. Products include videos, website, booklet and outreach.

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Location

Region: Southwest

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

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



PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota River Basin Water Quality Success Stories

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Why: The Minnesota River has been cited as one of the most polluted rivers in the state and nation. Improving nonpoint source pollution in the Minnesota River Basin (Basin) is the central challenge. Cleanup requires the support of landowners making changes at the local scale. Numerous basin-wide stakeholder meetings have come to the same conclusion: there is a need to learn from and highlight successes and replicate effective techniques to reduce contaminants. Residents in citizen watershed groups have been requesting examples that detail what has worked locally, why it has worked and how it can be replicated. In order to improve water quality in this context, citizens and watershed professionals need examples of successful case studies that have showed measurable water quality improvements. This project will disseminate information to inform future related efforts.

Goals:

- Broadly, reduce levels of nitrates, phosphorus, sediment or other contaminants in ground and surface waters by highlighting and publicizing proven approaches for pollution reduction (spreading the word of what is currently working and encouraging similar projects).
- Improve water and land use practices by providing concrete case studies detailing BMPs, behaviors and actions that have resulted in cleaner water, and clarifying and publicizing what has worked.
- Learn from past successes in order to better inform future efforts to meet milestones for watershed protection.
- Educate landowners across the Minnesota River Basin about successful water quality protection using video interviews of natural resource professionals and landowners.
- Provide an innovative educational tool, an online, multi-media website that will enrich and update the Minnesota River Basin Data Center website (<http://mrbdc.mnsu.edu>).
- Share data with the public, landowners, watershed professionals via both traditional and nontraditional outreach.
- Contribute to the knowledge base, disseminate information to citizens and watershed specialists that will inform and improve capacity for water protection efforts.

Direct Outcomes

This project will develop a multi-media interactive website that highlights water quality success stories across the Basin. The web browsing public will be able to choose from a map or list of successful subwatershed projects across the Basin and can watch short videos of natural resource professionals and landowners explaining the process (both land practices adopted and citizen engagement approach) that led to improvements. Summaries of each case study will be available online as well as a citizen-friendly booklet that details the type and cost of conservation methods used and how landowners were engaged.

- Citizens have clear examples of what has worked in other areas across the Basin and how their work was funded.
- Watershed professionals and water quality specialists have concrete examples of what combination and density of best management practices have proved to be most effective.
- Civic Engagement specialists will have a better understanding of local successful water quality improvement approaches that they can replicate elsewhere.
- Pollution reduction scenarios for individual or multiple parameters (sediment, phosphorus, nitrogen, ammonia, dissolved oxygen etc) will be explained and promoted across the Basin.



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2014 Main Proposal

Project Title: Minnesota River Basin Water Quality Success Stories

- Collectively, all the above outcomes can lead to improved water quality stewardship across the Basin.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Research water quality trends and Identify 8-10 subwatersheds with measurable water quality improvements over the past decade. Budget: \$23,707	June 2015
2. Interview key players and collect, compile, and summarize information about conservation practices and civic engagement approaches. Budget: \$30,303	June 2015
3. Film and produce 8 (3-4 minute) videos of success stories. Budget: \$36,089	June 2016
4. Develop, citizen-friendly booklet, web graphics and website. Budget: \$22,250	June 2016
5. Work with advisory team to develop outreach materials and communication strategy. Budget: \$23,323	June 2016

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

The project team includes Water Resources Center staff: Kimberly Musser, Assistant Director – project manager, research, conduct interviews, develop graphics, website, education materials, and outreach. Rick Moore, GIS Specialist – research, conduct interviews, GIS, graphics and multimedia. MSU Students – research, graphics, and video production. Anne Queenan, Queenan Productions – interviews, video production and editing, outreach. Patrick Moore, Riverartisan – advise, outreach and communication strategy. Final team partners will depend on research findings (Outcome 1) but will likely include a broad-based partnership of water resource professionals and landowners with members from the following groups: MDNR, BWSR, MPCA, MDA, University of Minnesota Extension, SWCDs, Watershed Projects (e.g. Chippewa River, Hawk Creek, Redwood-Cottonwood Control Area), and Citizen Groups.

B. Timeline Requirements

July 2014 – June 2015

- Assemble the advisory group to identify case studies. Perform research (water quality trends, ELINK, etc.).
- Conduct interviews, collect and compile materials.

July – December 2015

- Construct the web pages, perform research, develop maps, photos, graphics and aerial imagery.

December 2015 – June 2016

- Complete project and test final product with advisory and citizen groups.
- Develop communication strategy and promote the findings via public presentations, social media, news releases, etc.
- Put on or join existing events to publicize project and promote better understanding and stewardship.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

This project is part of a larger strategy to increase public awareness about water quality improvement efforts across the Basin. This project will aid in the statewide Watershed Restoration and Protection Efforts by learning from past successes in order to better inform future efforts. The proposed project will improve information flow, help bridge information gaps, and enrich and update the Minnesota River Basin Data Center website (<http://mrbdc.mnsu.edu>) which was originally funded by LCMR (LCCMR). By disseminating key findings about common themes that have led to historic successes, watershed professionals will be better equipped to craft successful future efforts.

2014 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Minnesota River Basin Water Quality Success Stories

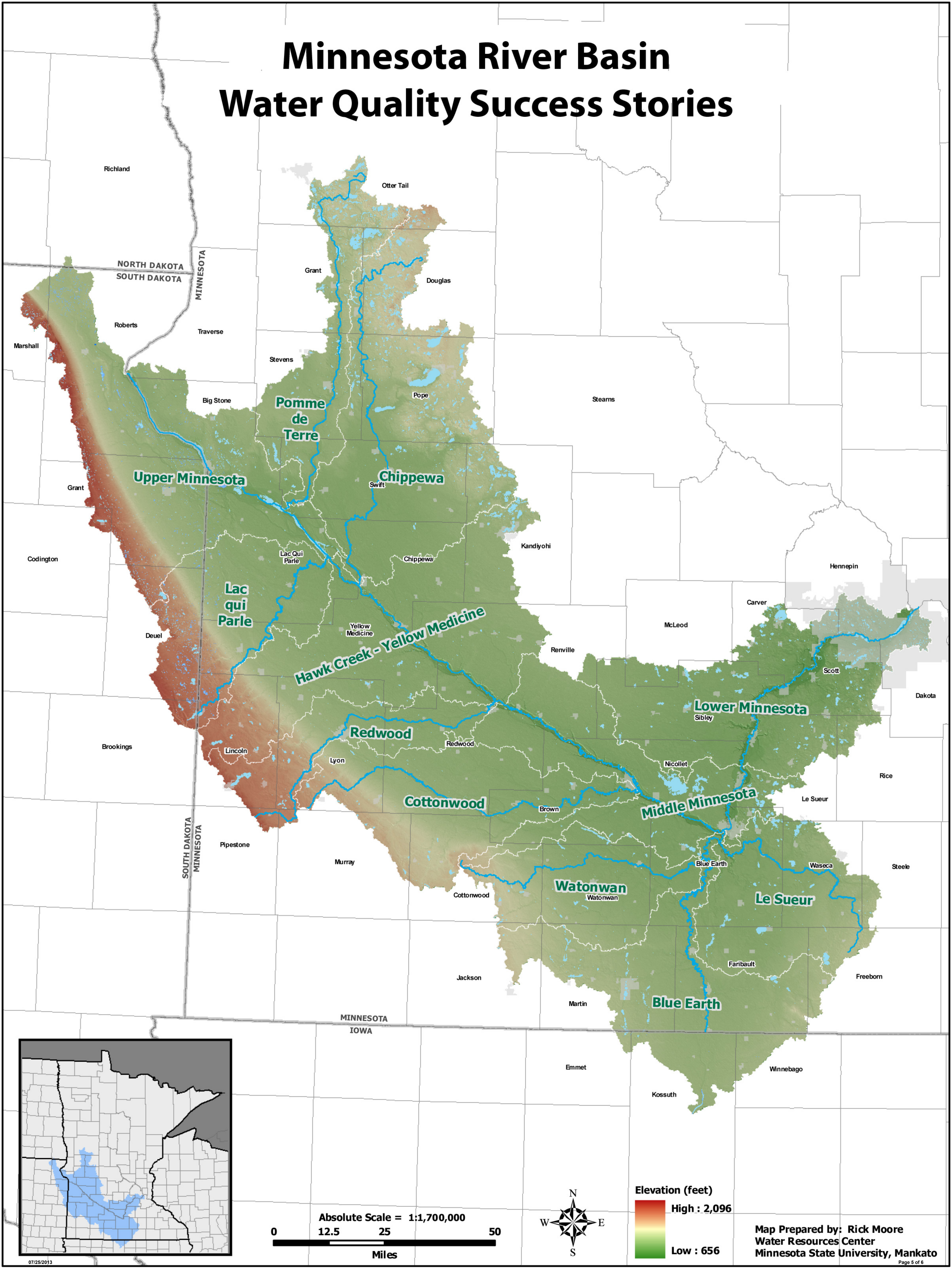
IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET - 2014-2016

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	
Personnel Staff - Kimberly Musser- 47% employment/yr (salary 100% soft money)- 2 yr period. project manager, research, conduct interviews, develop graphics, website, education materials, and outreach. 20% benefits	\$	37,447
Staff- Richard Moore 23% employment/yr (salary 100% soft money) - 2 yr period. GIS Specialist: research, conduct interviews, GIS, graphics and multimedia. 50% benefits.	\$	25,843
Students - 2 - 16% employment/yr (salary 100% soft money)- 2 yr period. Research, graphics, and video production. 8% benefits (FICA paid during summer)	\$	18,060
Anne Queenan - Queenan Production	33,000	
Patrick Moore - Riverartisan	16,000	
Travel: Travel for interviews and meetings- 20 interviews with watershed specialists and citizens and advisory team	\$	2,722
Additional Budget Items:	\$	2,799
Printing	\$	1,500.00
Wireless Microphone	\$	799.00
External Hard drive	\$	250.00
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$	135,871

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:	\$ -	
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:	\$ -	
In-kind Services During Project Period: WRC Staff Time (\$14,000); MSU-M Business Office (\$8,400); Computers and Printing (\$1,500); Advisory Group (\$22,000 - 22 people at \$500 per day, 2 meetings)	\$ 45,900.00	Pending
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): N/A	\$ -	
Funding History: N/A	\$ -	

Minnesota River Basin Water Quality Success Stories



PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota River Basin Water Quality Success Stories

Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description

Kimberly Musser, Project Manager

As Assistant Director of the Water Resources Center, Minnesota State University, Mankato, (WRC MSU-M), Kimberly Musser has coordinated a wide variety of Minnesota River Basin (MRB) centered projects. She has served as project manager for the *State of the Minnesota River Water Quality Monitoring Reports*, *Minnesota River Basin Trends Report*, *Minnesota River Experts: An Educational Field Trip Online Minnesota River Basin Data Center website update and expansion*, *Le Sueur River Civic Engagement Project*, *MPCA Nutrient Communication Tool*, and assisted with the Minnesota River Blueway Nomination among others. These projects have all centered on summarizing data and providing information about the Minnesota River and its tributaries.

Kimberly brings over a decade of project management experience to the project. Additionally, she has developed and taught over a dozen courses MSU-M in the Geography and Urban and Regional Planning departments. She holds a Master's degree in Community and Regional Planning from the University of Oregon and an undergraduate degree in Geography from the University of California at Berkeley.

Water Resources Center, Minnesota State University, Mankato (WRC, MSU-M)

In 1987 the WRC was created to serve as a regional center for gathering, interpreting, and distributing data of environmental significance. Since then we have housed three major Minnesota River projects are housed at the WRC. The Minnesota River Basin Data Center (<http://mrbdc.mnsu.edu>), originally funded by LCMR (LCCMR) in 1997, and serves as the Minnesota River Basin's data clearinghouse for information on environment, economy and communities in the region. The Minnesota River Board (<http://www.minnesotariver.org>) is based out of the WRC and works closely with the joint powers board to build partnerships and support efforts to improve and protect water quality in the Minnesota River Basin. The citizen-based Minnesota River Watershed Alliance (<http://watershedalliance.blogspot.com/>), a coalition that connects a diverse selection of citizens, nonprofit organizations and government agencies, providing information about water quality related issues and efforts.

Faculty and students accomplish these tasks through applied research, educational programming, technical assistance, and water resource planning. In addition, we have GIS staff with the capacity to create sophisticated GIS analysis and maps and 3-dimensional landscape visualization. Using the latest data, the WRC helps citizens within the Minnesota River Basin enhance the quality of regional lakes, rivers, wetlands, and groundwater.

Since its beginning, the WRC has participated in over 100 research, educational, and planning projects involving partnerships with dozens of public and private organizations. These projects range from groundwater, lake assessment, and TMDL studies to water quality workshops to development of watershed-based plans for surface water quality protection. Our stability since 1987 stands as a testament to the objective and quality products we produce. Long-term partnerships with counties, nonprofit organizations, and state agencies have resulted in many important and far-reaching land and water resource initiatives. We have a dedicated staff and look forward to enhancing the public's connection with the Minnesota River.