

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

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 096-C

Land Stewardship in Secondary Education

Category: C. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ 130,000

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

Summary:

Environmental Education for 7-12 graders using an outdoor classroom setting to establish land stewardship in young adult populations and increase interest in Environmental Studies and Conservation beyond the educational setting.

Name: Suzy Boysen

Sponsoring Organization: River Bend Nature Center

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Location

Region: Southeast

County Name: Dakota, Dodge, Goodhue, Le Sueur, Olmsted, Rice, Scott, Steele, Waseca

City / Township: Faribault

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



PROJECT TITLE: Land Stewardship in Secondary Education

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

River Bend Nature Center will provide an outdoor classroom to local area students in middle school through high school. Increasing advances in technology paired with fast-paced lifestyles creates a disconnect between student and nature. River Bend can provide the opportunity for students to make that connection by offering Environmental Education programs that meet current state STEM curriculum standards. Our main goal is to increase the likelihood that they will become future land stewards. As a leader in habitat restoration and conservation, our programs would impact the general populations within the region. Our Environmental Education programs would be sequential in nature with the caveat of meeting state STEM curriculum standards. Beginning in 7th grade, students could learn about orienteering; 8th graders learn about world habitats & species; 9th graders learn about the butterfly effect; 10th graders learn about the carbon footprint; 11th graders learn about alternative energy; and 12th graders learn about land stewardship and careers in Environmental Education.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- *Land Stewardship in Secondary Education*
- *\$130,000*
- *Provide job opportunities for two permanent full time Naturalist Educator staff and four Naturalist Educator Interns which includes training and field experience for naturalists to teach effective programs that increase understanding of our environment and encourage future land stewardship.*
- *Evaluate 7-12 STEM test scores and compare with previous scores. Evaluate increase/decrease in number of students that continue education in Environmental Studies at post-secondary education institutions. Survey grades 7-12 attitudes toward conservation throughout a 5 year span using the likert scale and semantic differential.*

Activity 1: Land Stewardship in Secondary Education

Budget: \$130,000

Provide Environmental Education programming for 7-12 students within the region.

Outcome	Completion Date
<i>1. Evaluate 7-12 STEM test scores annually and compare them to previous years test scores. Data is compiled into phases throughout 5 years to illustrate success of programming efforts. The outcome would be an increase in STEM test scores and an increase in Environmental Studies majors in post-secondary education.</i>	<i>Phase 5: July 2020</i>
<i>2. Survey student attitudes toward conservation in 7-12 grades. Data is compiled to illustrate changes in attitudes. The outcome would be an increase in a positive attitude as shown through measurements taken over the course of 5 years.</i>	<i>Ongoing until 2020</i>



III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Activity 1: 7-12 Environmental Education: Project team consists of the following River Bend Nature Center staff: Sarah Shimek, Education Coordinator—develops onsite and outreach curriculum according to state standards/coordinates programming needs with area schools; Naturalist Educators #1 & #2, Naturalist Educator—assists with coordination of programming with area schools, implements programming; Naturalist Educator Interns #1, #2, #3, and #4—implements programming. We currently have 9 Volunteer Naturalists to assist with programs to reduce the teacher to student ratio. The Cannon River Watershed Partnership would act as a resource for programs involving water quality education.

B. Timeline Requirements

The 7-12 Environmental Education programming begins for the 2014-2015 school year. Evaluation and survey research is conducted at the end of each school year for a total of 5 years. Data compiled will be disseminated within the participating communities and educational venues.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

The dissemination of findings will be to community members, educational venues, and the engagement of education professionals in planning and decisions about the application of study findings to improve Environmental Education programming. Relevant results will be shared with study participants through, for example: Feedback forms with information about land stewardship and suggestions for educating children within the home for parents, reports and fact sheets summarizing key study findings, presentations to Education Professionals (school board meetings, teacher workshops, etc.), newsletters, and press releases. River Bend will re-evaluate the programs annually and adjust, if needed, to meet state guidelines. No future funding would be needed.

2014 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: *Land Stewardship in Secondary Education*

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 1 year

BUDGET ITEM (See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses", p. 13)	AMOUNT
Personnel: <i>Naturalist Edu. - coord./implement programming, 100% Permanent FTE, 0% Benefits=2</i> <i>X \$30,000 Annual Salary</i> <i>Naturalist Edu. Intern - implements programming, 100% Temporary FTE, 0% Benefits=4</i> <i>X \$15,000 annual salary</i>	\$ 120,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: <i>12 program supplies - gear, clipboards, binoculars, microscopes, notebooks, etc. \$5,000</i> <i>Technology upgrade - computer equipment and software \$3,000</i> <i>Storage upgrade - shelving, cabinetry \$2000</i>	\$ 10,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 130,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
In-kind Services During Project Period: 9-12 <i>Volunteer Naturalists, estimate 650 volunteer hours at minimum wage</i> <i>River Bend Nature Center \$170,000 taxes, transportation costs</i> <i>There has been no history of funding for this project</i>	\$ 274,713	Secured



07/25/2013

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PROJECT MANAGER QUALIFICATIONS

Suzy Boysen, Operations Coordinator

As Operations Coordinator of River Bend Nature Center, Suzy is responsible for coordinating all administrative operations within the organization as assigned by the Executive Director. Including but not limited to:

- Maintain accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, and investment accounts.
- Analyze and interpret all fiscal budgets for the Executive Director and Board of Directors.
- Update visitor and personnel policies and procedures, act as Human Resources liaison.
- Implement fundraising goals including event coordination, program development, grant writing, and donor correspondence.
- Oversee all Marketing & Communications for the organization.

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

River Bend Nature Center is a member supported nonprofit committed to enriching lives through outdoor discovery and learning. River Bend is situated on 743 acres that contain a fascinating variety of natural features - beautiful examples of maple-basswood forest, wetlands, restored prairies and floodplain forests are linked by ten miles of well-maintained trails. The Straight River flows through the heart of River Bend, sweeping in graceful curves past towering trees and limestone cliffs. The nature center is located just east of downtown Faribault and is open to the public free-of-charge throughout the year. River Bend Nature Center's mission is to help people discover, enjoy, understand, and preserve the incredible natural world that surrounds us. It does this by providing natural history, environmental education, and outdoor recreation opportunities both on-site and off-site for people of all ages and abilities from Faribault, Northfield, Owatonna, and other surrounding communities. During 2012, over 16,000 participated in River Bend's weekend programs, school curriculum, youth nature camps, and community events. Thousands more visited to hike, bike, explore, observe wildlife, and relax.