

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2015 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 071-C

Be The Spark: Experiential Youth Development

Category: C. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ 576,377

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 years: July 2015 - Dec. 2017

Summary:

We will educate and engage >450 youth from faith communities in experiential workshops and river trips. Youth will then return to activate their communities to take action.

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Location

Region: Statewide

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

Diagram of our process and map of potential river sites.

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



PROJECT TITLE: Be The Spark: Experiential Youth Development to Climate Action

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

1. Climate change presents an increasing threat to Minnesota communities and natural resources. At the same time, young people are less connected with nature and report feeling powerless in the face of environmental degradation and climate change. Faith communities play a central role in the life of Minnesotans; they are already organized and share a theological mandate to care for creation. Yet rarely do they focus their stewardship activity on earth care.

2. In this project we will help integrate “creation care” in the form of climate change action into the root culture of faith communities. Through leadership development based on the principles of healthy youth development and outdoor experiential learning, youth will be mentored and empowered to return to their faith communities to implement environmental initiatives. Because Minnesota is a diverse and changing state, and it is important that all communities are involved in generating climate solutions, our engagement efforts will have a particular focus on including youth from diverse socio-economic, racial and ethnic communities. We will engage mosques, Buddhist meditation centers, synagogues and Christian congregations in underserved communities including the White Earth Reservation, North Minneapolis, and rural Minnesota farm communities.

3. To begin the process, we will conduct outreach presentations for more than 3,000 individuals in 75 to 100 congregations, describing the connection between climate change and Minnesota natural resources, and inviting youth to participate in learning about and protecting those resources. Through these presentations, we will recruit 450 youth from over 50 congregations of diverse faith traditions to participate in our “Be The Spark” program. Each youth will participate in both a climate education and leadership workshop and a river adventure/ service-learning trip. Once youth have participated in “Be The Spark,” we will help them channel their energy into climate adaptation or mitigation projects within their own communities, inviting adult members to follow their lead in integrating climate change awareness and action into their congregational life.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Outreach and Youth Experiential Engagement

Budget = 507,377

Outcome	C. Date
1. Over three years, conduct 50 to 75 outreach presentations or events reaching 3,000-5,000 people. More than 20,000 people would be reached through online marketing and newsletters.	5/2017
2. Provide 450 - 1,000 youth from a 50 diverse faith communities over 3,000 hours of climate leadership development training workshop.	5/2017
3. Create a river curriculum. Select program sites, guest speakers, and learning objectives to help youth focus on the relationship between climate change, human action, and natural resource science including topics such as erosion, drought, agriculture, and energy production. Engage specialists at 10 selected program sites such as Buffalo Ridge Wind Farm, Moonstone Farms, Lamberton Prairie Farm, DNR Minnaqua Program, Upper Sioux Agency, Granite Falls Ethanol Plant, and others to provide experiential learning opportunities for youth to further understand the complexity and importance of natural resources in Minnesota.	5/2015
4. Provide 120 youth 12,000 total hours of place-based learning on 5-day canoe expeditions (\$587/participant); 160 youth 4,800 total hours of place-based learning on overnight canoe trips (\$250/participant); and 170 youth receive 1,360 total hours of place-based learning on day trips (\$147/participant).	9/2017
5. Provide 120 youth and congregation members a total of 2160 hours of excursions (\$142/participant).	9/2017



6. Evaluate the process and learning outcomes and connections between the “Be The Spark” workshop and the river trips.	11/2017
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Activity 2. Follow-up support to facilitate implementation of climate change initiatives Budget: 69,000

Outcome	C. Date
1. With the support of our staff, partner organizations, and mentors in their community 436 youth (expecting a 3% rate of attrition) will return from “Be The Spark” to host 45 community dialogues in which they share how they were personally impacted by their experiences in the workshop and on the river and the importance of “creation care”. They will invite 15,000 community members to follow up actions made available by MNIPL. Collectively the youth will reach at least 90,000 individuals as they implement their action plans in their faith communities.	9/2017
2. Students will contribute to youth videos, blog posts and newsletter articles to tell their stories and broaden the reach of learning and inspiration among faith communities, reaching a total of 90,000 individuals	9/2017
3. Youth from three congregations per year will be supported in organizing a multi-generational trip for their community to participate in a day-long river trip.	9/2017
4. MNIPL will maintain ongoing relationships, through newsletters and invitations to collective action, with the 45 faith communities (assuming attrition) whose youth participated in the project. Students in the UMN Sustainability Minor will be paired up to mentor youth as they work to take action.	9/2017

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

This project is a collaboration between Wild River Academy (WRA) and Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light (MNIPL). MNIPL will spearhead the faith community recruitment, workshop development, and congregational follow up. Wild River Academy will spearhead the experiential learning component along rivers in Minnesota. For curriculum development, recruitment and follow through action we will work with local partners such as Clean Up our River Environment (Montevideo MN), Louis Alemayehu (with communities in N. Minneapolis), the UMN Healthy Youth Development Prevention Research Center, and the UMN Institute on the Environment/ Sustainability Minor.

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy

MNIPL works to build capacity in congregations to take action on climate change. This project will help us develop lasting relationships with congregations that we can continue to work with after the project. We have secured other funds to work on congregational organizing but not yet on natural resource engagement and youth development. This project will benefit from other congregational work we are doing, but stands on its own financially. In the second and third year of the project we will begin asking for donations from faith communities which will be used to create a scholarship fund to allow for future programming for communities who need financial support. This will also set a precedent for fees for service that will allow for this work to be sustained after the three-year grant period ends.

C. Timeline Requirements

2015: Program Planning; Outreach presentations at 25 congregations; 5 to 10 workshops; 10 river trips

2016: 20 to 25 more outreach presentations; 5 to 10 workshops; 15 river trips including 3 intergenerational trips; and 25 follow-up relationships conducted with congregational youth.

2017: 20 to 25 more outreach presentations; 5 to 10 workshops; 20 river trips including 6 intergenerational trips; and 25 follow-up relationships conducted with congregational youth.

2015 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Be The Spark: Experiential Youth Development to Climate Action

IV. Total Request Budget (3 years) \$576,377
Activity One Request Budget (3 years) \$507,377

Amount

Personnel:

curriculum design and implementation of youth workshops. The MNIPL program manager will attend some \$135,000
 WRA Program Manager 1 FTE (\$45,000 x 3 years) \$135,000
 Additional River Guides (maintain 1:5 guide to participant ratio --- 121 staff days x 2 staff x \$150 \$36,300
 Project Intern \$15,000 a year for 3 years \$45,000

Contracts:

Speakers and Hosts (\$200 x 141 days) \$28,200
 Lodging (\$150 x 60 trips) \$9,000

Equipment:

Maintenance and Repair (\$2000 x 3 years) \$6,000
 Materials (\$200 x 60 trips);Gear Rental (\$100 x 60 trips);Life-Jackets (\$50 x 20);Paddles (\$50 x 20) \$20,000

Transportation:

Staff Transportation/ travel to outreach presentations and workshops \$7,000
 Youth Transport To and From river trips, trailer rental, school bus rental \$51,100

Additional Budget Items:

Food for river trips (\$150 x 141 days) \$21,150
 Marketing Materials (\$1,500 x 3 years) \$4,500
 Merchandise (t-shirts for 450 participants) \$4,500
 Materials for workshops (\$50 x 20) \$1,000
 Liability Insurance (\$560 x 3 years) \$1,680
 Inland Marine Insurance (\$349 x 3 years) \$1,047
 Fees, Permits, and Licenses (\$300 x 3 years) \$900

Total **\$507,377**

Activity Two Request Budget (3 years) \$69,000

Budget Item

Amount

Youth Projects:

MNIPL Program Staff for community dialogues and long term projects (\$15,000 x 3 years)(.25 FTE) \$45,000
 Minigrants for Longterm projects 2000 x 3 congregations x 2 years \$12,000

Media:

Newsletter, Blog, Videos, Social Media (\$1,000 x 3 years) \$3,000

Additional Budget Items:

Materials, Food, and Travel (\$3,000 x 3 years) \$9,000

Total **\$69,000**

Total Project Budget Request to LCCMR **\$576,377**

V. Other Funds

Other Non-State Money to be Applied to Project During Project Period:

Bush Foundation Community Innovation Grant for climate conversations in faith communities ~40,000 applied
 Regeneration Project, Annual funding from Interfaith Power 15,000 * 3 years ~45,000 expected
 Congregational Foundations and Individual Donations ~60,000 expected

Other State Money to be Applied to Project During Project Period:

NA

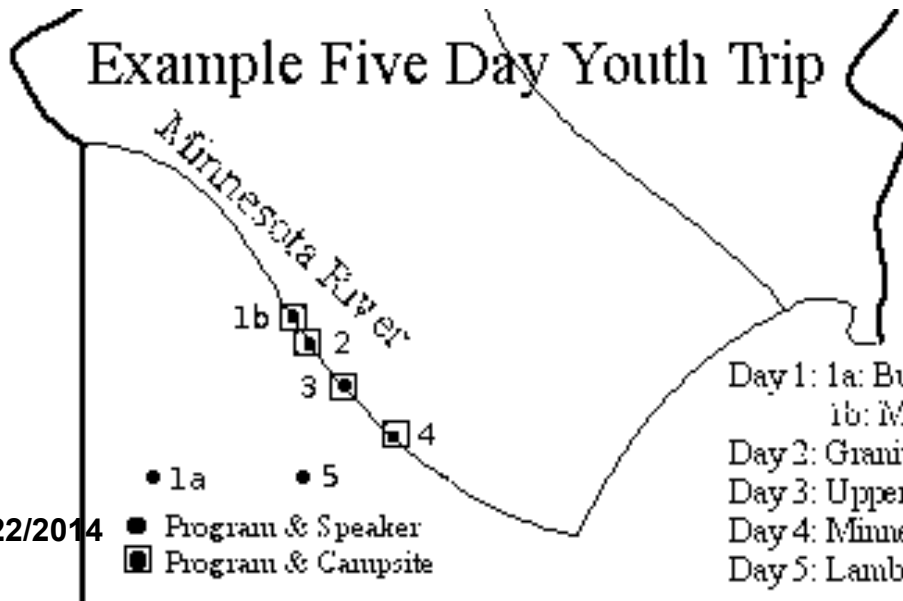
In-Kind Services to be Applied to Project During Project Period:

Youth Director Salary in kind investment (40 * 120 hours * \$30 per hour) \$144,000
 MNIPL Board of Directors in kind investment (10 volunteers at 40 hours each) \$10,000
 Faith Community volunteers (50 communities * 10 volunteers* 20 hours each) \$250,000
 MNIPL Executive Director Salary (.25 FTE * 3 years) + MNIPL Operations \$73,750 secured

Be the Spark! Experiential Youth Development to Climate Action

Summary of youth participant experience

<p>Faith Community Outreach and Education: -Presentations for >3000 individuals in 50 to 75 congregations, describing the connection between climate change and MN Natural resources, and -Invitation to youth to participate in protecting those resources.</p>	<p>Leadership Development Workshops: 450 youth from over 50 diverse congregations will participate in a day-long workshop to: -Learn about climate change -Develop leadership skills</p>	<p>Placed-based learning River trips : Trips will take youth to program sites, guest speakers, and activities that will help youth focus on the relationship between climate change, human action and natural resource science</p>	<p>Faith Community Dialogues Youth will: -Present their experience and provide education -Lead their community in a dialogue about natural resources and climate change -Invite their community to take action with them on a MNIPL supported activity.</p>	<p>Ongoing Interfaith Climate Action Youth will lead the way! And the community will follow, breathing youth energy into aging communities and changing the culture of creation care in faith community culture</p>
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- Day 1: 1a: Buffalo Ridge Wind Farm
 1b: Moonstone Farms
- Day 2: Granite Falls Hydroelectric Power Dam
- Day 3: Upper Sioux Native Community
- Day 4: Minnesota Valley History Learning Center
- Day 5: Lambertson Prairie Restoration Farm

Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description

Julia Nerbonne (MNIPL) (B.A. Vassar College; M.S., and Ph.D. in Conservation Biology, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities) an organizer and social science researcher has taught numerous courses in both natural and social science on aquatic ecology, conflict management of natural resources, and environmental ethics. She has extensive experience in community education, field research, and community organizing. She also conducts research on the role of scientific knowledge on citizen empowerment, teaching in the department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology at the University of Minnesota. MNIPL is a well organized and stable organization that under Julia's leadership is doubling in staff capacity and developing programming that is successfully growing its member base in regional networks around the state of Minnesota including the Twin Cities, Arrowhead, St Peter and Mankato. **Erin Pratt** (MNIPL Program Director) LPC is a professional counselor and a wilderness therapist with a background working with adolescents, families and groups. She was a psychology fellow at the UMN Healthy Youth Development and brings these researched based principles into her program design and delivery.

Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light was founded in 2004 with 1,800 individual members and more than 300 faith communities, Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light helps faith communities coordinate their care of creation, social justice and global and local peacemaking concerns through workshops, consultation, strategic planning and leadership development. MNIPL is a statewide chapter of a national organizational whose national leadership provides resources for support as well as stands ready to scale up successful initiatives as they are modeled in state initiatives.

Natalie Warren, Project Manager

In 2011, Natalie Warren (Wild River Academy) was one of the first two women to paddle the 2,000 miles from Minneapolis to Hudson Bay, recreating Eric Sevareid's route from *Canoeing With the Cree*. She has been featured in *Canoe&Kayak* and *Outside Magazine* and was nominated for the 2012 Canoe & Kayak Expedition of the Year. Natalie founded Wild River Academy in 2012 to share her passion for Minnesota's waterways and to engage community members in watershed education through outdoor recreation. In 2013, Natalie organized a group of 11 young adults to paddle the length of the Mississippi River to engage schools in watershed education through an educational model called adventure learning: through blogs, videos, pictures, and discussion questions, the expeditioners were able to share their learning experience with students all over the nation. Through presentations and canoe expeditions, Natalie has inspired communities in Minnesota to recreate on local, urban rivers to learn more about the environmental and social issues happening in their own backyard.

Wild River Academy

Wild River Academy is a non-profit organization in the Twin Cities dedicated to engaging communities in watershed education and outdoor recreation. Wild River Academy provides educational canoe trips for schools and organizations. Trips stop along the route to interact with environmental organizations, community members, farmers, and naturalists. This experiential learning opportunity not only enhances outdoor skills, it exposes participants to the social and natural environment in their watershed, encouraging a sense of peace and place. In 2013, WRA introduced over 60 community members to recreating on the Minnesota River, a river that was once one of the most polluted rivers in the nation.