

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2016 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 116-C

Student Outdoor Environmental Education Program

Category: C. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ 96,600

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 years, July 2016 to June 2019

Summary:

This project will expand an existing student environmental education program at the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge from 3000 to 6000 student visits per year.

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Sponsoring Organization: Friends of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, Inc.

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Location

Region: Central, NW

County Name: Becker, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Hubbard, Otter Tail

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

This project is centered at the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge and the surrounding counties.

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



PROJECT TITLE: Student Outdoor Environmental Education Program

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

This project responds to an increasing demand from surrounding school districts for the Student Outdoor Environmental Education Program at the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge. The project is planned to increase the number of youth participating in this program from 3000 to 6000 student visits per year. This program is sponsored and performed by the Friends of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, Inc. volunteers in conjunction with Refuge staff. The increase in participation will be accomplished by hiring an Education Coordinator to facilitate the coordination needed to expand the program. This program primarily serves elementary and middle school children, but also some preschool, high school and other youth organizations. Most students come from the surrounding Counties of Becker, Clay, Clearwater, Hubbard, Mahanomen, and Ottertail including tribal, public and private schools. The funding request includes some student supplies and busing assistance for schools in addition to hiring a coordinator.

The Friends of Tamarac organization recently completed construction of a \$640,000 Discovery Center facility to accommodate the increased student participation, but they currently lack the funding stream needed to hire the education coordinator. Therefore, this project proposal requests funding for a 3 year period while the Friends of Tamarac establish a sustainable funding stream through endowment resources, planned giving and sustainable membership giving.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Environmental Education Program Expansion

Budget: \$96,600

Expand the existing environmental education program by doubling the number of student visits from 3000 to 6000 per year over a 3 year period and increase the number of third grade students participating in the multi season program from 600 to 1200 over a 3 year period. The Friends of Tamarac, Inc. will hire a 50% FTE education coordinator to handle the increased number of students and schools in the program. The Friends of Tamarac Education Committee will provide and train volunteers to implement the lesson activities.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Increase student visits to 4000 per year	July 2017
2. Increase 3 rd grade student participation to 800	July 2017
3. Increase student visits to 5000 per year	July 2018
4. Increase 3 rd grade student participation to 1000	July 2018
5. Increase student visits to 6000 per year	July 2019
6. Increase 3 rd grade student participation to 1200	July 2019



III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

The expansion of the Student Outdoor Environmental Education Program is a partnership project including the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR), Friends of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge (FOT), and the Laurentian Lakes Chapter (LLC) of the North County Trail Association (NCTA). The partnership includes the participating public and private school entities in a six-county area surrounding the TNWR. The TNWR staff provides facilities support and limited coordination support for this program. The FOT organization will handle funding including financial accounting, in-kind volunteer support for the student learning sessions, project management, and Discovery Center facilities. The FOT mission is to facilitate activities and programs that interpret, protect and restore the natural and cultural resources of the Refuge. The LLC provides volunteer in-kind support to FOT and maintains the North Country National Scenic Trail.

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy

This project responds to an urgent need for environmental education of youth. Even in rural areas, societal changes are resulting in youth with a nature deficit. This program stimulates an understanding of the natural world through discovery in an outdoor classroom. The strategy is to present environmental discovery activities and lessons that teachers coordinate with everyday classroom work. The children receive hands on, experiential lesson activities about how the environment changes with seasons, how wildlife adapts, how the water cycle works, how invasive species affect native species, etc. Over 150 documented lesson activities are designed to address standards in the curriculum areas of science, mathematics, language arts and social studies. STEM based learning principles are incorporated into the lessons. The 3rd grade program in particular brings students to the Refuge for 3 visits in the fall, winter and spring for participative studies. TNWR is uniquely positioned for this program due to the close proximity of 3 of the 4 biomes (major ecosystems) of the state and the North Country National Scenic Hiking Trail.

The impacts of this project are naturally inquisitive children with a basic environment and natural resource understanding. Children who in the future will be better prepared to make environmental decisions and be better stewards of the land. This project will specifically broaden the scope in terms of partner schools, families and nature based community groups.

C. Timeline Requirements

A 3 year funding cycle is requested for this project. During this time the environmental learning program will expand to at least double the number of student visits from 3000 to 6000. Additional volunteers to present the classes will come from growing FOT and LLC membership programs. During the 3 years of funding support, the FOT will establish an endowment, planned giving, and sustaining membership programs to achieve a sustainable ongoing funding stream.

2016 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Student Outdoor Environmental Education Program

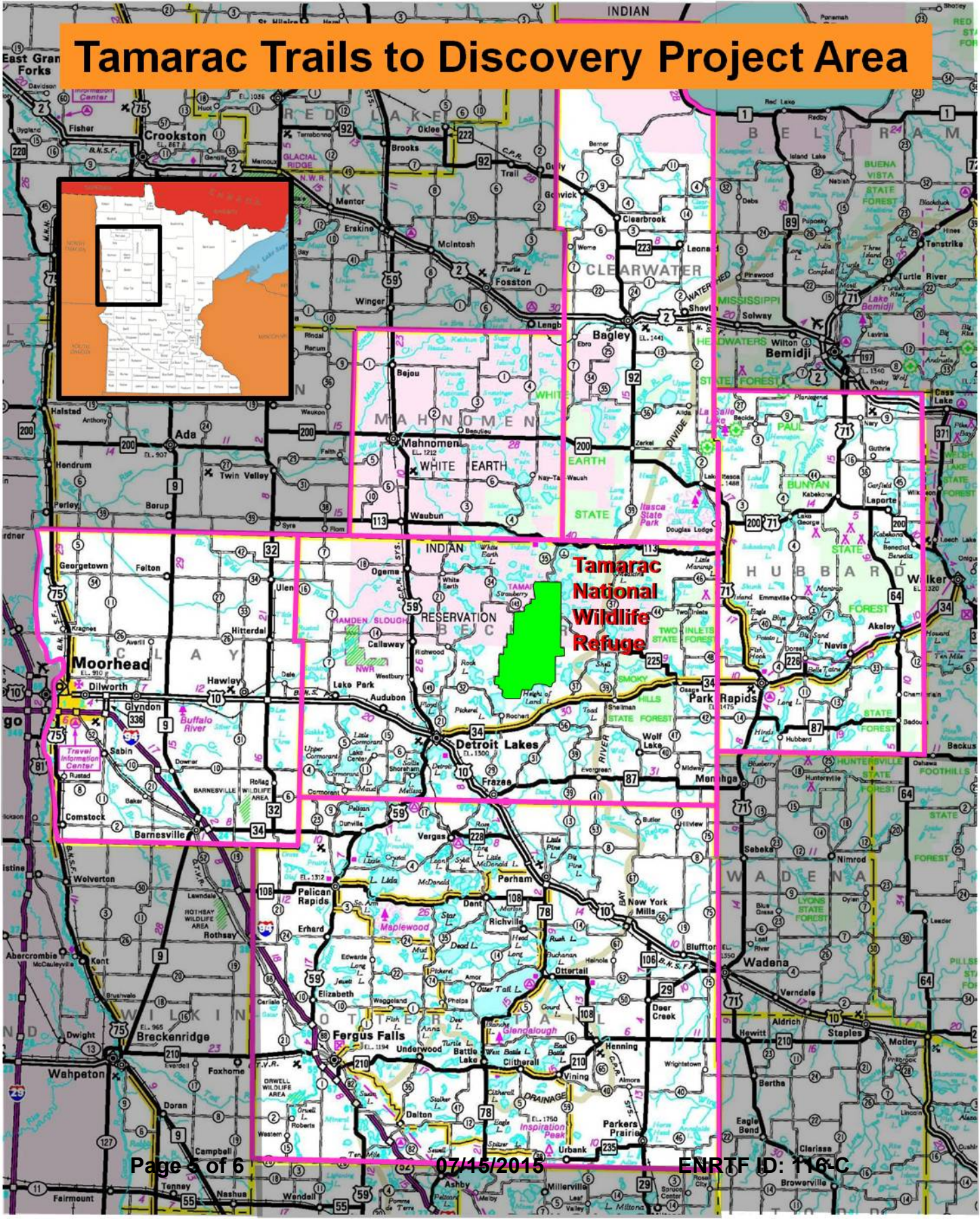
IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 3 years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel: Education Program Coordinator, 50%,FTE, for 3 years	\$ 75,000
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: N/A	\$ -
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Third grade student learning supplies consisting of backpack, nature journal, reusable water bottle, ruler and pencil.	\$ 8,700
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): N/A	\$ -
Travel: Milage for education coordinator to attend meetings and visit schools in the six counties. Estimate 2000 miles/year.	\$ 3,300
Additional Budget Items: Transportation scholarships to assist schools with busing costs.	\$ 9,600
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 96,600

V. OTHER FUNDS

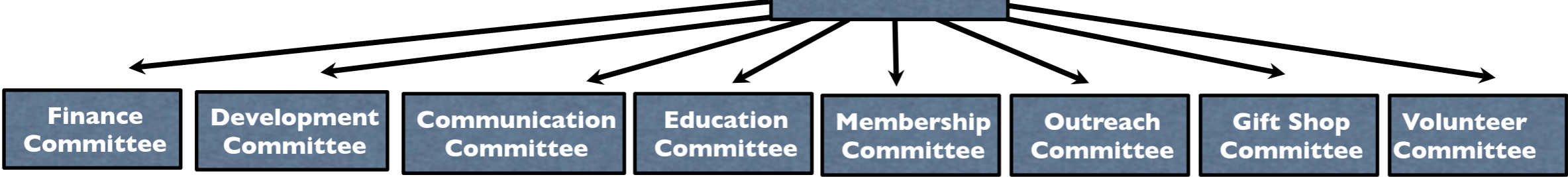
<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: N/A	\$ -	
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: N/A	\$ -	
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: Friends of Tamarac volunteer instructors and aids - 3000 hours over 3 years - \$60,000; Laurentian Lakes Chapter, NCTA volunteer instructors and aids - 600 hours over 3 years - \$12,000	\$ 72,000	Pending
Funding History: 2014 - \$5,000 National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for Capacity Building; 2011 - \$5,000 NFWF for Nature of Learning Program; 2009 - \$10,000 NFWF for Nature of Learning Program; 2007 - \$5,000 NFWF for Capacity Building	\$ 25,000	Secure
Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation: N/A	\$ -	

Tamarac Trails to Discovery Project Area



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