

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2017 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 089-C

Establish a Minnesota River Basin-Wide RiverWatch Program

Category: C. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ 285,500

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 years, July 2017 - June 2020

Summary:

Create a River Watch program on the Minnesota River through which high school based teams will conduct Water Quality monitoring (and other environmental learning) in accordance with MN-PCA protocols.

Name: Ted Suss

Sponsoring Organization: Friends of the Minnesota Valley

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Bloomington MN 55438

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Location

Region: Southwest

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

The visual is a link to a four minute video which explains the River Watch program by following a high school team.

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



PROJECT TITLE: River Watch on the Minnesota River

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

1. *WHY this project needs to be done;* The Minnesota River contributes a vast majority of the sediment (over 80%) being deposited in Lake Pepin and other areas of the Mississippi River. There is no basin-wide body or watershed entity collecting data and overseeing goals for river sediment reduction or for water quality improvement. Data will be collected in accordance with and reported to the MN PCA. Building a stronger awareness and public support for river water quality improvement and associated land management improvement is essential if the Minnesota River water quality and sediment issues are addressed successfully. Friends will establish a River Watch program in the Minnesota River Basin modeled after the successful River Watch program operated by the International Water Institute on the Red River.

2. *Overall GOALS*

One: Create and operate a Minnesota River Basin-wide River Watch Program that includes high school based River Watch clubs trained to conduct monitoring using PCA protocols

Two: Create all materials, necessary to recruit high school based River Watch teams and a marketing/engagement plan to recruit the initial 15 high school based River Watch teams.

Three: Train River Watch team leaders and have teams complete three years of river monitoring, data collection, and other activities.

Four: Create a cadre of young people, future leaders, dedicated to and experienced in working together to improve water quality and preserve the natural resources of the Minnesota River Basin

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Develop a basin wide River Watch Minnesota River program plan. This work to be completed after the ENRTF application deadline but prior to ENRTF funding. This will be funded from non ENRTF other sources. Work performed from July 2016-June 2017 will involve planning, development of promotional materials and a School Team River Watch Planning Tool, contacting schools to establish and enroll River Watch Teams, and building a structure for ongoing support and operation of the River Watch Program.

Budget: \$30,000 non ENRTF Funds

Outcome	Completion Date
1. <i>Prepare a High School River Watch Team "How To" manual.</i>	<i>January 1, 2017</i>
2. <i>A complete and publish a Minnesota River, River Watch Program plan for distribution to funders, schools, and other interested parties</i>	<i>March 30, 2017</i>
3. <i>Enroll 15-20 school district River Watch teams.</i>	<i>June 30, 2017</i>
4. <i>Train a team advisor(s) for each high based River Watch team.</i>	<i>Sept 1, 2017</i>

Activity 2: Create print and online marketing materials for River Watch

Budget \$5,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1 A complete set of printed online graphics, and posters to promote River watch is created	Sept1, 2017

Activity 3: Acquire necessary equipment and materials for use by River Watch Teams

Budget \$52,500

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Purchase ten YSI (brand name) Multi Parameter probes for shared use by River Watch Teams. This is the equipment recommended and used by the International Water Institute	September 1, 2018
2. Purchase Five YSI Multi Parameter probes for shared use by River Watch Teams	Sept. 1, 2019

Activity 4: Operate three years of the River Watch program

Budget: \$180,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. <i>At least 15 teams participate in the first year of River Watch program that includes training, water quality monitoring, data collection, and reporting using PCA protocols</i>	<i>June 30 2018</i>
2. <i>At Least 20 teams, participate in the River Watch year two program</i>	<i>June 30 2019</i>
3. <i>At least 25 teams participate in the third year River Watch Program</i>	<i>June 30, 2020</i>



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2017 Main Proposal
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Activity 5: Convene an annual River Watch Forum Conference each of three years **Budget: \$30,000**

1 100 River Watch participants and an 50 adults participate in the first annual River Watch Conference/Forum to report team collected data and activities	April-May 2018
2. 100 River Watch participants and an 75 adults participate in the second annual River Watch Conference/Forum	April – May 2019
3 100 River Watch participants and 100 adults participate in the first annual River Watch Conference/Forum.	April-May 2020

Activity 6 Recruit schools to re-enroll or newly enroll in the River Watch program **Budget \$18,000**

Outcome	Completion date
1. At least 20 high school based River Watch teams are enrolled for the 2018-2019 school year. This includes teams from year one.	June 30, 2018
2. At least 25 high school based River Watch teams are enrolled for the 2019-2020 school year. This includes teams from year two	June 30, 2019

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Friends of the Minnesota Valley-Project Sponsor providing staff oversight by its Executive Director.
 International Water Institute-technical advice and guidance
 Lower Minnesota Watershed District-Funding for planning year, possible funding for future years
 Izaak Walton League of Minnesota funding for planning year and promotion of program to schools
 Local School Districts in the Minnesota River Basin-Hosts for River Watch Teams
 American Fisheries Society/MSU, field guidance by graduate students in data gathering and analysis

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy

At present there is no effective basin wide project, program, unit of government, or other effort. That creates a single voice or common agenda for the Minnesota River Valley and basin. This results a lack of comprehensive data on water quality and soil erosion. This project will not only provide reliable data, but will raise public awareness and build a cadre of young people and future leaders in the basin who have experience working together and who view the environmental problems of the river through a common lens.

This project will provide a hands-on learning experience to hundreds of students in dozens of school districts. Over time, River Watch team work will expand and grow to include examining sources of sediment and water pollution and advocating on a local level for Best Management Practices to address those concerns.

Activities to occur during fiscal years 2018, 2019 and 2020 will be funded with ENRTF funding plus financial support from Friends of the Minnesota Valley and other local funders for anu unforeseen expenses.

Programming that begins in FY 2021 and continues will be supported by more aggressive fundraising, some of which will occur during the project period, but may require continued funding from the ENRTF or similar sources. Funding in FY 2021 and beyond from local sources including watershed organizations in the Minnesota River basin will be achievable because tangible results in the form of data, active school based teams, and the annual conference/forum.

C. Timeline Requirements

July 2016-June 2017 Pre ENRTF Phase one planning and program development including recruiting schools
 July 2017- June 2018 Program year one, River Watch is fully functional and operating with 15-20 teams
 July 2018-June 2019 Program year two of River Watch is fully functional with 17-22 teams
 July 2019-2020 Program year three of River Watch is fully functional with 20-25 teams

2017 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: River Watch on the Minnesota River

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET *three project years*

BUDGET ITEM (See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses", p. 13)	AMOUNT
Personnel: River Watch Coordinator; Newly hired employee, who will be a natural resources or science professional 100% FTE year one \$50,000, 100% FTE year two, \$51,000, 100% FTE year three \$52,000. salary and benefits or contract each year.	\$ 153,000
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: Printing and graphics arts to design and produce brochures, posters, and other materials to promote the River Watch program. Contract will be awarded following a solicitation of proposals and obtaining cost estimates. This is a year one activity only.	\$ 5,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Purchase fifteen YSI Professional Plus Multi-Paramater probes at \$3,500 per probe. Ten probes purchased year one and five probes purchased year two.	\$ 52,500
Travel: mileage reimbursement for project coordinator to travel to schools and work with site teams, some overnight lodging and meal reimbursement. \$15,000 each of the three years.	\$ 45,000
Additional Budget Items: Annual conference and forum for all River Watch team members, adult advisors, sponsors, and local Watershed staff. Conference will be held each of the three years. \$10,000 per year. Purchase meals, hall rental, speaker fees, promotion of event. Additional costs will be raised by Friends of the Minnesota Valley	\$ 30,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 285,500

V. OTHER FUNDS (This entire section must be filled out. Do not delete rows. Indicate "N/A" if row is not applicable.)

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: 0.25 FTE of project manager salary , Ted L. Suss, Friends Executive Director for each of the three years at \$20,000 per year.	\$ 60,000	<i>Secured</i>
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: None NA	\$ -	<i>Indicate: Secured or Pending</i>
In Kind Services to Be Applied to this Project during the Project Period: Office space, phone, photocopying, incidental postage at \$5,000 per year each of the three years.	\$ 15,000	<i>Secured</i>
Funding History: Funds committed or expected for expenditure from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017, Lower Minnesota River Watershed District \$10,000 MN Valley Izaak Walton League \$10,000, Friends of the Minnesota Valley \$5,000 Other funds to be raised during FY 16 \$5000	\$ 30,000	
Remaining dollars from ENRTF Appropriation NA	\$ -	

River Watch Video Link

Friends of the Minnesota Valley River Watch Proposal

This link is to a four minute video that shows a high school river Watch Team in action and explains the program on the Red River

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jeze7cx1jJM>

Sponsoring Organization: Friends of the Minnesota Valley Organizational Description

The Friends of the Minnesota Valley is a non-profit, 501c3 organization based in Bloomington Minnesota. The Board of Directors includes members from the lower and middle Minnesota River. The Friends was instrumental in advocating for the founding of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, the lawsuit and settlement that brought the Minnesota Valley Trust into existence, and most recently led the effort to obtain legislative approval of a bonding appropriation to construct ten miles of the Minnesota Valley State Trail in Bloomington.

The Friends has several hundred members, supporters, and volunteers.

The Friends of the Minnesota Valley is one of the founding sponsor organization of the Minnesota River Congress (MRC), in that role, the Friends have received two McKnight grants to fund operation of the Minnesota River Congress.

Project Manager: Ted L. Suss, Executive Director of the Friends of the Minnesota Valley

Ted L. Suss has was one of the initial founders of the Minnesota River Congress (MRC) and serves on its Action Board. He has been a key planner of all MRC activities including developing its governing structure its goals, and operational procedures. Through this work, he has developed a wide network of contacts across the entire Minnesota River basin.

Ted L. Suss has administered grants, including an ENRTF grant for construction of a canoe landing and trailhead in Morton Minnesota, the previously mentioned McKnight grants, and numerous grants to school districts. As a School administrator and superintendent, he is experienced in financial management, program design and implementation, and contract administration.

A key for success of this project is the relationship Mr. Suss has with school superintendents, principals and other educators in the Minnesota Valley where he served twelve years as a superintendent. His knowledge of school personnel and school operations will be invaluable in recruiting schools to sponsor River Watch Teams.

River Watch Project Coordinator

The person selected for this position will hold at least a four year degree in Natural Resources, Water Quality, Environmental Education, or a similar field. The plan is to hire or contract with a person during FY 2017, using non ENRTF funding, to assist in development of the plan, become fully trained, and begin recruiting school based teams.