

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

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**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 101-C**

Providing Residential Environmental Learning Experiences to Under-Served Students

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**Category:** C. Environmental Education

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**Total Project Budget:** \$ 130,000

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

**Summary:**

We wish to provide scholarships to serve a minimum of 1,000 under-served Minnesota students for 2-night, 3-day residential environmental learning experiences at the Audubon Center of the North Woods.

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**Name:** Bryan Wood

**Sponsoring Organization:** Audubon Center of the North Woods

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**Location**

**Region:** Northeast

**County Name:** Statewide

**City / Township:** Sandstone/Dell Grove

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**Alternate Text for Visual:**

State of Minnesota Funding Decrease Per Pupil Since Fiscal Year 2003

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



**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)**

**2017 Main Proposal**

**Project Title:** *[Insert "Project Title" here in document header]*

**PROJECT TITLE: Providing Residential Environmental Learning Experiences to Under-Served Students**

**I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

1. We wish to provide scholarships to under-served schools for 2-night, 3-day residential environmental learning experiences at the Audubon Center of the North Woods.

- Today’s students are increasingly being left out of nature learning experiences with children today spending far less time outdoors than previous generations. For students low on the socio-economic spectrum, this is compounded as there are typically no outdoor areas near where they live, or adults who spend time with them in natural areas.
- Many schools do not have the financial resources to make environmental field trips possible. Additional factors impeding their participation are the cultural and language barriers increasingly seen with immigrant populations. Parents do not understand what the experience is, and are wary of sending their child away on an overnight field trip. Students coming from low economic families cannot afford to pay the student fee, or buy winter outerwear or a sleeping bag for use in the dormitory.
- We as a society have a responsibility to foster environmentally literate citizens from all backgrounds and it starts with our children. They will make the decisions for our society’s future.

2. We want to engage with the diverse and changing demographics of MN’s schools by offering scholarships to financially strained schools to come to the Audubon Center of the North Woods for 2-night, 3-day residential environmental learning experiences.

- Through our residential environmental education programs, students will experience six 2-hour classes, two evening programs, receive seven meals and two nights lodging.
- Teachers select from their choice of approximately fifty class options during their stay in the fields of biological, earth and physical sciences, adventure, energy, food, cultural history and team building.
- We will make lasting impacts and open students’ eyes and minds to a world larger than they previously knew, and awareness that their actions have environmental consequences. Studies show that most people who develop a love of nature trace it back to a positive childhood experience with a caring adult.

3. We would offer scholarship assistance of up to 100% of the \$115/student cost.

- We want to improve the environmental literacy of Minnesota students and share with them the joy of being immersed in nature.
- We would serve student populations in the Twin Cities metro area, as well as greater Minnesota.
- Eligible schools would have free and reduced lunch student percentages of over 25%.
- We would translate our school forms into Somali, Arabic, Hmong and Spanish for better understanding of students and parents. We would purchase winter gear and sleeping bags necessary for underserved populations attending.

**II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

**Activity 1:** *Provide Scholarship Funds of up to 100% cost of \$115/student experience on a Needs-Basis through Scholarship Application Review for 2-night, 3-day residential environmental learning experience at the Audubon Center of the North Woods to Minimum of 1,165 students* **Budget:** \$115,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Provide minimum of 1,000 K-12 student residential environmental learning experiences at the Audubon Center of the North Woods. Schools eligible would be Minnesota public schools with free and reduced lunch percentages above 25%. Special consideration will be given to schools with high numbers of minority and immigrant populations.	June 30, 2019

**Activity 2:** *Translation of K-12 Program Documents into multiple languages for student* **Budget:** \$7,000



**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)**

**2017 Main Proposal**

**Project Title:** *[Insert "Project Title" here in document header]*

*and parent understanding*

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Through contract with a language translation company, translate K-12 trip planner , student health, adult health, liability release, packing list and parent information forms into Arabic, Somali, Hmong and Spanish	Sep. 1, 2016

**Activity 3:** *Create Inventory of Sleeping Bags and Winter Outerwear Housed Permanently at Audubon Center of the North Woods to be lent out to all incoming Students in Need* **Budget:** \$8,000

1. Purchase 100 Pairs of new/used Winter Boots, Winter Coats, Winter Bibs, Stocking Caps, Mittens, Neck Gaiters and 50 sleeping bags to be lent out to any students in need during their Audubon Center of the North Woods experience over the duration of the grant program and beyond	Sep. 1, 2016
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**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

- The project team would consist of the Audubon Center of the North Woods staff.
- Executive Director Bryan Wood would secure a translation company for translating forms, as well as visit thrift stores and work with vendors to purchase sleeping bags and winter outerwear for students.
- Mr. Wood and Program Director Jill Baum would reach out to schools that have expressed interest in the past, but had financial limitations, as well as reach out to prospective schools in under-served areas of the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota. School visits and public sessions for parents and students would occur at attending schools.
- Mr. Wood and Ms. Baum would review and award scholarships on a needs-basis.
- Audubon Center administrators, educators, food service and facilities staff would all work with program delivery for each school attending.

**B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy**

- This project’s impact would be significant in the lives of hundreds of Minnesota K-12 students.
- The chance for students to be immersed in nature for multiple days, spend time outside with their classmates and teachers, and learn in the environment is a powerful experience. For many, they have never done anything like this, let alone spent a night away from home.
- We have seen many schools enact environmental projects and activities at their schools after a visit to our site. Schools realize and embrace the value of the experience and work to keep the trip an annual experience through fundraising. We meet with the schools to give them ideas for how to do this.
- Getting the schools here initially is the largest hurdle, when parents, teachers and faculty are unfamiliar to the process. Once here, it is much easier to work with them to continue returning.
- Studies show that students who have nature experiences report higher academic scores, improved focus, lower stress levels, and fewer behavior problems.
- The benefits to society of this project are also many. This project would foster environmentally literate students, helping shape their decision making process individually and their collective impact on society.
- If we are successful with this grant and find an increasing need for financial assistance to connect more diverse and changing student demographics to residential environmental learning experiences, we may come back to LCCMR with future funding requests.

**C. Timeline Requirements**

- All activities would be completed by June 30, 2019.

## 2017 Detailed Project Budget

**Project Title:** *Providing Residential Environmental Learning Experiences to Under-Served Students*

### IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 3 years

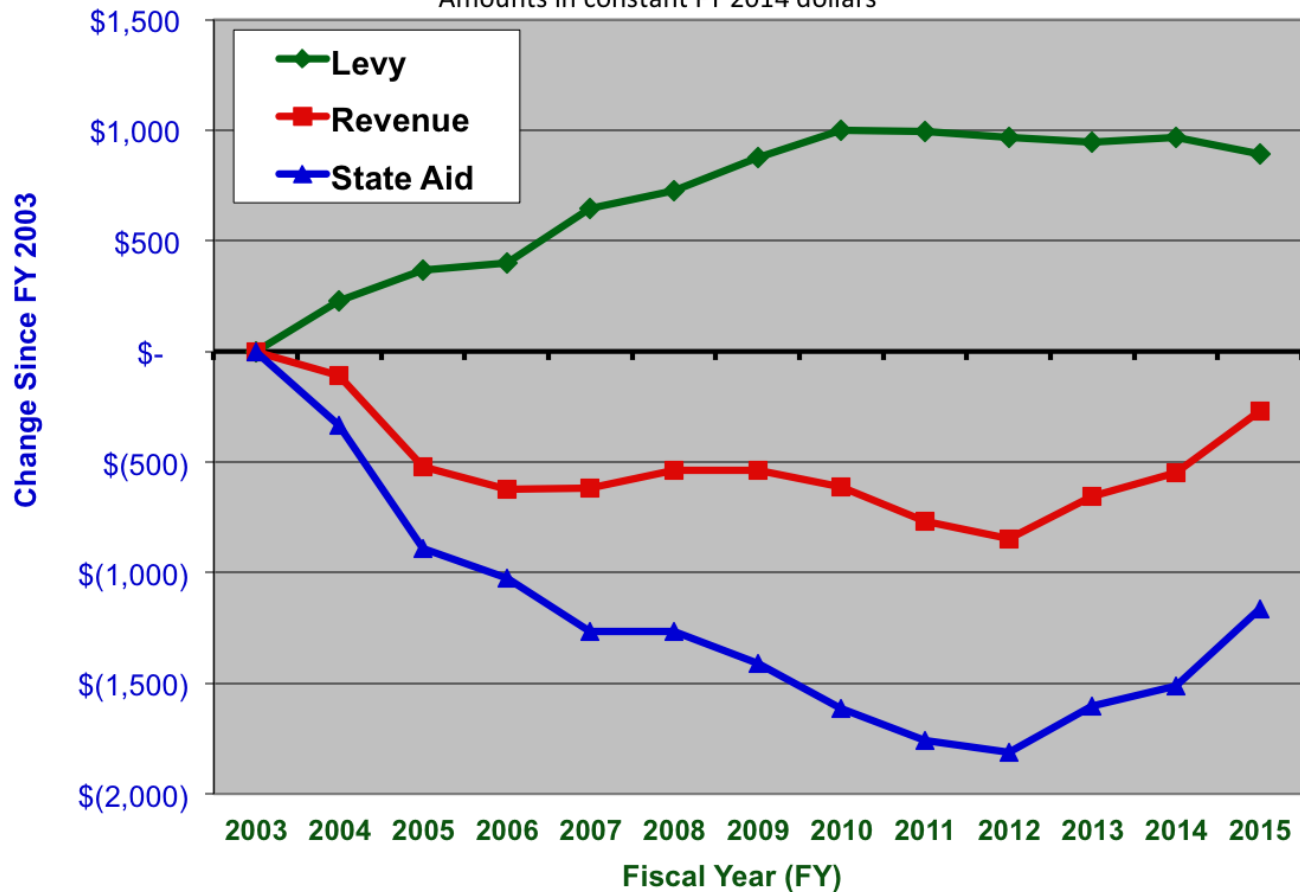
<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<b>Personnel:</b>	N/A
<b>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:</b> We will hire a language translator contractor to translate 6 school forms into Arabic, Somali, Hmong and Spanish	\$ 7,000
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> Purchase 100 New or Used Pairs/Items Winter Boots Winter Coats Winter Bibs Winter Hats Mittens Neck Gaiters Purchase 50 used or new sleeping bags	\$ 8,000
<b>Travel:</b>	N/A
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b> Scholarships of up to 100% student fee (\$115/student) for students to attend Audubon Center of the North Woods 2-night, 3-day residential environmental learning experience.	\$ 115,000
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =</b>	<b>\$ 130,000</b>

### V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
<b>Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b> Ecolab - \$7,500 St. Paul Audubon Society- \$2,000 Minneapolis Audubon Society - \$1,500 Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter - \$1,000	\$12,000	<i>Secured</i>
<b>Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b> <i>Audubon Center of the North Woods Staff to deliver program services for residential environmental learning experiences. This includes education, administration, facilities and food service staff.</i>	\$115,000	<i>Secured</i>
<b>Funding History:</b> We have an extensive history of funding support over the past 18 years of our K-12 residential environmental education program. Past sources include but are not limited to: Jeffers Foundation, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, Ecolab, Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, St. Paul Audubon Society, Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter, Onan Family Foundation, and individual donors	N/A	N/A
<b>Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation:</b>	N/A	N/A

### Change in Per Pupil School District Operating Revenue, Property Tax Levy, & State Aid Since FY 2003

Amounts in constant FY 2014 dollars



There has been a dramatic decrease in state funding to Minnesota public schools over the last 12+ years. State funding has dropped by more than \$1,000 per pupil from FY 2003 to FY 2015. This makes field trips to places like the Audubon Center of the North Woods much harder. We request scholarship funds to provide necessary financial support to make these experiences possible for Minnesota's K-12 students.

## Project Manager Qualifications

**Bryan Wood**- Executive Director at Audubon Center of the North Woods

- Leads organization with a \$1.6 million annual budget, 25 employees and 8 naturalist interns
- Oversees operations, programs, strategic plan, budget and development
- Teaches undergraduate and graduate level post-secondary courses
- Serves as public relations advocate on behalf of the Audubon Center of the North Woods
- Networks and forms productive partnerships with other environmental organizations
- Coordinates adult and community programs
- Chief grant writer with over seven years of receiving and overseeing grant projects up to \$1.5 million

## Organizational Description

The Audubon Center of the North Woods (ACNW) is a 501(c)3 non-profit residential environmental learning center on the east shore of Grindstone Lake near Sandstone, MN. As an accredited school, ACNW serves over 15,000 individuals annually including 4,000 K-12 students from across MN and WI. ACNW also provides undergraduate and graduate level field courses to several colleges and universities, youth and family camps, adult and Road Scholar programs, outreach programs and community events. ACNW is the State of Minnesota's largest charter school authorizer with 34 schools and nearly 8,000 students. ACNW has been providing environmental education experiences since 1972.

**Our Mission:** *To instill a connection and commitment to the environment in people of all communities through experiential learning*

**Our Vision:** *A healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth*

**Our Core Values:**

- *We demonstrate respect, care and passion for the Earth, all people and all things*
- *We strive for excellence in everything we do through integrity, open communication and teamwork*
- *We value, engage and appreciate individuals for their unique contributions*
- *We believe in life-long learning through positive shared experiences with the natural world*
- *We encourage others to recognize our interconnectedness with the Earth through their actions*