

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

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 191-J

Real Wildlife, Real Conservation, Real Impact

Category:

Total Project Budget: \$ 488,128

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

Summary:

The Wildlife Science Center proposes to provide environmental education programs to 7500 new students throughout the state using ambassador animals in experiential, programming, based upon state and national standards.

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Location

Region: Metro

County Name: Statewide

City / Township: Columbus

Alternate Text for Visual:

Photos of students at the Wildlife Science Center

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



PROJECT TITLE: “Real Wildlife, Real Conservation, Real Impact”

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

There is a growing disparity between the time kids spend indoors wired to technology and the time they spend outside experiencing and learning from the environment. According to marketing research conducted by Childwise, children ages 5-16 spend between 6-8 hours on “screen” each day compared to 3 hours in 1995. In addition, Nature Conservancy data suggests that 10 percent of youth say they spend time outdoors every day. The poll also showed youth that appreciated natures were those that had a personal experience in nature; clearly getting kids a meaningful experience outside is critical to getting them engaged in conversation about environmental issues.

Children are naturally drawn to animals – Wildlife Science Center programs foster this curiosity and wonder while teaching respect for all living things. Our approach to environmental education is a simple one, we use the natural world and all of its components to reinforce educational objectives set by the State of Minnesota. We reference state and national education standards when designing programs and strive to enhance what teachers are already covering in the classroom. Numerous studies have shown that when objectives are reinforced with real-life experiences, the students have a greater level of understanding and retention. Our programs not only tap into children’s natural attraction to animals, but we leverage student’s affinity for technology to bridge the gap between screen time and outdoor time, and introduce a means to benefit from both.

The Wildlife Science Center uses live wild animals to generate interest, inspire participation, illustrate systems, and explore the interface between natural systems and humans systems in order to move toward the goal of informed environmental decision making by youth.

“Teaching children about our natural world should be treated as one of the most important events in their lives.” –Thomas Berry

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Introduce 7,500 new students over a 3 year cycle to environmental education **Budget: \$75,000**
programming through on-site and outreach wildlife programs.

Description: The focus of Wildlife Science Center programs is connecting students to wildlife through living ambassadors of Minnesota biomes. Each minute program includes live animals demonstrating the importance of biodiversity, behavior and how individual species are necessary for the health of the environment even the animals that may not be at the top of a list of favorite animals. Our living representatives include wolves, mountain lions, black bears, red fox, gray fox, coyotes, bobcats, lynx, hawks and owls, snakes, spiders, and other native wildlife. We strive to help students to develop positive attitudes toward science and environmental education.

Outcome	Completion Date
Approximately 7,500 additional students receive place-based environmental learning at the Wildlife Science Center.	June 30, 2017
\$10 per student=2500 kids per year (for 3 years=total of 7500 students)	June 30, 2018
	June 30, 2019

Activity 2: Introduce 7,500 students over a 3-year cycle to place-based environmental education inside and outside the classroom. **Budget: \$112,500**

Description: Home to wolves, mountain lions, lynx, fox, bears, raptors and other Minnesota wildlife, the Wildlife Science Center provides a unique backdrop for learning about wildlife. These living representatives and our



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2016 Main Proposal

Project Title: “Real Wildlife, Real Conservation, Real Impact”

collection of wildlife artifacts provide the opportunity for learners to see live animals, touch study skins and skulls, hear animals howl, hoot, bark and growl.

Outcome	Completion Date
Approximately 7,500 students receive place-based environmental learning at the Wildlife Science Center.	June30, 2017 June 30, 2018
\$15 per student=2500 kids per year (for 3 years=total of 7500 students)	June 30, 2019

Activity 3: Evaluate success, measure impact of the Wildlife Science Center program, and disseminate results

Budget: \$45,000

Description: Oversee, track, and evaluate the success of the “Real Wildlife, Real Conservation, Real Impact” program and curricula providing place-based, experiential educational opportunities, in accordance with k-12 academic standards for youth throughout the metro and statewide. We will develop and implement evaluation strategies to measure the impact and effectiveness of the experiential programming and integrated curricula in achieving environmental education outcomes in science, social studies, and language arts, as well as impact on core personal skills and executive function development. We are allocating \$45,000 for data collection, evaluation, and dissemination (\$15,000/year).

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1.Evaluation process established and implemented;data collection, evaluation, andreporting	August 1,2017	\$15,000
2.Data collection,evaluation, and reporting	August 1,2018	\$15,000
3.Data collection,evaluation, and reporting;evaluation report summary,distribution, dissemination, and publication	August 30, 2019	\$15,000

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Schools and school districts – will provide extensive in-kind assistance.

Wildlife Science Center staff and education specialists-will provide assistance with programming.

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy

We will enhance achievement in grades K-12 by combining outreach, classroom and offsite environmental education experiences so students may master state standards across a spectrum of subjects, develop skills necessary for making informed decisions about the wildlife management, create connections to the natural world, and think critically about their personal roles in the environment. This program will teach the next generation to appreciate the ecosystem in which they live, become active in the outdoors and stewards of the land and wildlife. Facebook, YouTube and other media will extend the reach and impact of the programs. Instilling a sense of stewardship in tomorrow’s leaders, which is the program’s ultimate goal, is vital to the long term health and protection of Minnesota’s natural resources.

C. Timeline Requirements

This is a three year program which will provide on-site and outreach programs using live animal ambassadors and experiential programs impacting approximately 7500 Minnesota K-12 students. By demonstrating success we plan to continue and expand the program through partnerships with schools and outside funding.

2016 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Real Animals. Real Conservation. Real Impact.

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET for 3 years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel: Project Director - 50% FTE salary only; 36 months; (\$35,000 annually) Program Coordinator - 75% FTE salary only; 36 months; (\$37,500 annually) benefits and taxes - (15,375 annually) and taxes paid for by the Wildlife Science Center in-kind support.	Personnel Additional benefits \$ 263,625
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: Ecosystem based curriculum expansion and development: prairies, deciduous forest, marsh, rich fen \$48254. support; (\$5000 annually) collection and evaluation (\$15,000 annually)	Marketing Project data \$ 108,253
Equipment/Tools/Supplies - See below	\$ 32,500
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): <i>In this column, indicate proposed number of acres and name of organization or entity who will hold title.</i>	N/A
Travel in MN: Vehicle, gas, maintenance, insurance to transport animals to outreach programs	\$ 65,000
Additional Budget Items: Liability insurance (\$6250 annually)	\$ 18,750
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 488,128

Equipment to live stream video \$12000, 10 trail cams \$2700, Laptop plus protective case \$1500, 2 Flat screen TVs plus sound system \$1500, 10 microscopes \$6000, 10 digital tablets plus cases \$3500,
 *Outreach Education Artifact Box \$1000, Resource books for classrooms \$2800
 Cameras for student use \$1500

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: <i>Foundation Grant \$10,000 pending</i> <i>Member support \$5000 pending</i>	<i>Pentair</i> \$15,000	<i>Pending</i>
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:	N/A	
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: Staff and education volunteer time	N/A	
Funding History:	N/A	
Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation:	N/A	

Wildlife Science Center

The Wildlife Science Center serves as an educational resource for all ages by providing exposure to a variety of wild animals; wolves, mountain lions, lynx, fox, bears, raptors and many others.



Engage your curiosity to inspire lifelong learning.



Experiential programs that teach students to appreciate the natural world, think critically about their personal roles in the environment, and help develop their sense of place.



Explore our living classroom, where students are encouraged to interpret what they see, hear, and feel.



Find your own meaningful connection with the natural environment as you learn about the center's resident wildlife.



Experience a connection with your environment.



The goal of our programs is to empower a sense of stewardship in tomorrow's leaders, which is vital to the long term health and protection of Minnesota's natural resources.

History and Mission of the Wildlife Science Center (WSC)

History

WSC is an independent nonprofit organization located on the grounds of Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area near Forest Lake, Minnesota. WSC was originally founded as a federally funded research center in 1976, known simply as the “Wolf Project”, to observe and document the physiology and behavior of gray wolves, in order to benefit both wild wolves and critically endangered wolves that existed only in captivity. The project became a private nonprofit in 1991, and was renamed as the Wildlife Science Center. WSC has continued conducting scientific studies on the resident gray wolves, and it is this long history of scientific study that has formed the basis for the research and education component of the program today.

Over the past 20 years, WSC has grown and is currently home to 60 gray wolves including Mexican gray wolves, and red wolves. It is also home to gray fox, red fox, lynx, bobcats, coyotes, black bears, cougars and several birds of prey. The WSC is not a zoo, but an educational facility. This environment allows WSC biologists to use natural events and on-going research within this “living classroom” to teach biology, ecology, scientific processes and wildlife management to students of all ages and backgrounds.

Mission

The Wildlife Science Center (WSC) is a nationally recognized educational and research facility. Its mission is to *serve as an educational resource* for all ages by providing exposure to wild animals and to the scientific body of knowledge generated for their conservation; *to advance understanding* of wild animal biology using long-term humane scientific studies on captive populations, thus *contributing to technical training* for wildlife agencies, educational institutions and conservation agencies.

Uniqueness of WSC

The Wildlife Science Center is unlike any other educational program in the way we use live animals to teach. WSC is the only facility of its kind in the country to combine the scientific study of North American carnivores with hands-on experiential learning. Through interactions with or observations of the animals at the Center and scientists, individuals learn not only about the specific animal, but also about science as a whole including the various roles that scientists play. WSC’s STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) curriculum uses a combination of independent and group study, hands-on experimentation and data collection, as well as observation and identification. The lessons imparted at the WSC are not only science; the subject of wolves and wildlife lends itself to discussions of history, culture, mathematics, literature and art, an interdisciplinary approach to learning. The WSC added photography classes to our summer schedule, returning to our philosophy and awareness of the value of art.