

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2018 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 105-C

Engaging a Diverse Public in Ecological Restoration

Category: C. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ 383,600

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 years, July 2018 to June 2021

Summary:

Great River Greening will make 5,300 restoration volunteer high-quality contacts through a myriad of offerings and levels of engagement, targeting a younger, more diverse audience.

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Sponsoring Organization: Great River Greening

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Location

Region: Central, Metro, Southwest

County Name: Anoka, Benton, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Goodhue, Hennepin, Isanti, Le Sueur, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Nicollet, Ramsey, Rice, Scott, Sherburne, Stearns, Washington, Wright

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

Words and Pictures Summarizing Activities and Past Accomplishments

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| _____ 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)

2018 Main Proposal

Project Title: Engaging a Diverse Public in Ecological Restoration

PROJECT TITLE: Engaging a Diverse Public in Ecological Restoration

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Great River Greening will make 5,300 restoration volunteer high-quality contacts through a myriad of offerings and levels of engagement, targeting a younger, more diverse audience. The overarching goals are to address ‘nature deficit’, get more people outdoors in natural areas in a way that offers sustained activity beyond the grant period, and to reflect the community demographics in which the volunteer restoration activities are taking place. The myriad of offerings will encompass a wide variety of restoration tasks; include use of technology; be offered in both Greater Minnesota and metro areas; and encompass four (4) levels of engagement with increasing responsibilities, knowledge, and autonomy.

The Trust Fund has historically supported Greening, the state leader in community-based restoration, in engaging volunteers through Metro Conservation Corridors and Bucks for Buckthorn allocations. Today, the need and opportunity to include all geographies and available sites, both Greater Minnesota and urban, has become more and more focal. We are also finding that ‘nature deficit’ has reached a level where we can no longer count on engaged citizens to volunteer. Studies show a staggering 38% of Minnesota’s youth do not participate in a single outdoor activity throughout the year. And this number gets drastically worse among youth of color. With this stand-alone engagement program concentrating solely on providing a high quality volunteer experience, we will be able to offer our programs to a wider geography and demographic range of communities, focusing squarely on the volunteer and the conservation education opportunity inherent with their outdoor restoration skill development and interaction.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: 4,000 Restoration Volunteers over 4 Levels of Engagement Budget: \$220,000

A total of 4,000 volunteers, targeting younger and more diverse audiences, will be fitted with all equipment, protective equipment, and receive handouts on techniques and natural history, day-of training on the techniques involved, a ‘roving presentation and Q&A’ with an ecologist on the importance of the work they are doing, ecology of the site, and the restoration plan; also they will take home a boot brush / pick to raise the level of invasive species protocol. Two PlayCleanGo invasive species sanitation kiosks will be developed and brought to all volunteer events. Demographic data on all volunteers will be documented. At least 5-10% of the volunteers will be engaged in our outstate programs: a) agricultural watershed restoration in the 7-Mile Creek watershed in Nicollet County; b) a ‘hunt for buckthorn’ program in the Anoka Sand Plain ecoregion, and Rum River watershed, under which volunteers will learn about mentoring programs, ‘learn to hunt/fish’ programs, access and expert tips.

Level 1 engagement opportunities include: a) general volunteering at large public Saturday events; b) de-centralized coordinated activities such as acorn and milkweed seed collection; and c) private events for school, worship, civic, and corporate groups. Level 2 engagement features an annual training to become a trained Volunteer Supervisor. 120 Volunteer Supervisors will be trained to lead the Level 1 events. Select Volunteer Supervisors will receive additional training for site-specific monitoring responsibilities to become a Site Monitor, which is Level 3 engagement: A total of 12 sites will be monitored, with 12-36 Monitors. Level 4 engagement is Site Steward, in which select volunteers receive further training and support, to allow them to take semi-autonomous restoration and management actions at an adopted site: Four sites will be managed under the Site Steward program using 4-8 Site Stewards.

| Outcome | Completion Date |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Volunteer Supervisor Training (Annual) | March 2019, |



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|--|------------|
| | 2020, 2021 |
| 1. 1,000 general volunteers | 12/31/2019 |
| 2. 3,500 cumulative general volunteers, 12 Site Monitors | 12/31/2020 |
| 3. 4,000 cumulative general volunteers, 4 Site Stewards | 6/31/2021 |

Activity 2: Field Learning for 900 Teens

Budget: \$ 90,000

900 teenagers will be engaged in restoration and monitoring activities. FLT sessions will include: classroom introduction; on-site restoration and/or monitoring; technology; exposure to environmental professionals and their careers during the site outing. Field Learning for Teens is Great River Greening’s youth education program, designed to introduce youth of color to the importance of environmental stewardship and the ways they can be involved in caring for our shared natural spaces - now and as future professionals. This program will raise our demographic service in the metro to reach >20% people of color.

| Outcome | Completion Date |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. 150 teens > 67% youth of color | 12/31/2018 |
| 2. 450 total teens > 67% youth of color | 12/31/2019 |
| 3. 750 total teens > 67% youth of color | 12/31/2020 |
| 4. 900 total teens > 67% youth of color | 6/30/2021 |

Activity 3: 400 Students in Schools for Pollinators

Budget: \$ 73,600

Statewide, 400 students or more will be engaged in hands-on pollinator education, through pollinator garden installation with pollinator curriculum, restoration of pollinator habitat or citizen science monitoring of pollinators at a local natural areas.

| Outcome | Completion Date |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. 50 K-12 Students Engaged | 12/31/2018 |
| 2. 200 total K-12 Students Engaged | 12/31/2019 |
| 3. 350 total K-12 Students Engaged | 12/31/2020 |
| 4. 400 total K-12 Students Engaged | 6/30/2021 |

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

- 1) Nicollet County SWCD and Nicollet County, via an existing cost-share position with Greening: ag region
- 2) National Wild Turkey Federation or similar: ‘hunt for buckthorn’ program. In-kind, and subcontract
- 3) Schools with pre-dominantly minority populations
- 4) USFWS Schoolyard Habitat Program (statewide) will be providing outreach and cost share
- 5) Local unit(s) of government and/or organization(s) tbd: in-kind, and eligible for volunteer recruitment subcontract(s)

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy Ecological and habitat restoration activities are a profound, meaningful, deeply engaging, and rewarding way to interact with the outdoors while gaining an active, working knowledge of habitat and ecology to the point of participation and action. This program will help create an engaged, active, informed citizenry better able to contribute to the preservation of Minnesota’s legacy. Our post-program surveys show that 95% of volunteers increased their knowledge of restoration and, for youth, 87% are interested in a natural resource-related job. We anticipate returning in ML2021 and every three years thereafter to support this program.

C. Timeline Requirements 3-years: July 1, 2018- June 30, 2021

2018 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Engaging a Diverse Public in Ecological Restoration

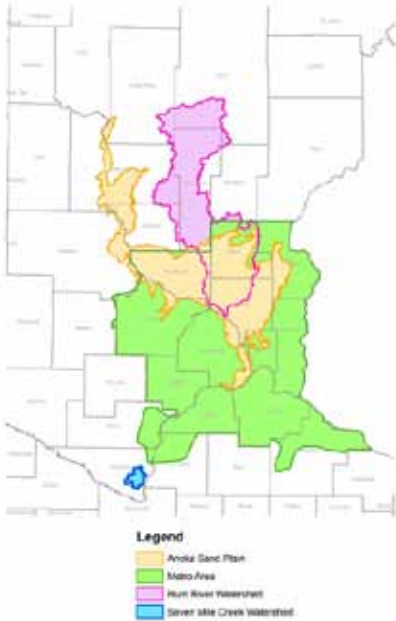
IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 3 years

| BUDGET ITEM | AMOUNT |
|--|-------------------|
| Wiley Buck, Project Manager (78% salary, 22% benefits): 0.07 FTE each year for 3 years | \$ 17,200 |
| Katie Brom, Volunteer Manager (85% salary, 15% benefits): 0.61 FTE each year for 3 years | \$ 85,000 |
| May Yang, Volunteer Outreach Coordi. (93% salary, 7% benefits): 0.61 FTE each year for 3 | \$ 67,600 |
| 2 Ecologists: J. Bohnen, T. Rexine (78% salary, 22% benefits): 0.15 FTE total, each year for 3 | \$ 32,000 |
| Susan Carlin, 7-Mile Ck Watershed Coord. (80% salary, 20% benefits): 0.05 FTE each yr for 3 | \$ 11,000 |
| Steve Hockett, Director of Conservation (85% salary, 15% benefits): 0.02 FTE each year for 3 | \$ 4,200 |
| Lisa Strauss, Grants Management Asst. (87% salary, 10% benefits). 0.10 FTE each yr for 3 | \$ 7,400 |
| David Schmitz, Field Coordinator (80% salary, 20 benefits): 0.15 FTE each yr for 3 years | \$ 23,000 |
| 2 Restoration Technicians (93% salary, 7% benefits): 0.11 FTE each year for 3 years | \$ 19,000 |
| Bill Smith, Director of Finance (77% salary, 23% benefits): 0.02 FTE each year for 3 years | \$ 5,200 |
| Julia Wells, Financial Operations Mgr (84% salary, 16% benefits): 0.02 FTE each yr for 3 yr | \$ 3,200 |
| Mary Anne Welch, Communications Mgr. (80% salary, 20% benefits): 0.02 FTE each yr for 3 | \$ 2,600 |
| Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: | |
| National Wild Turkey Federation or similar: ≤ \$5000 for 'Hunt for Buckthorn' | \$ 5,000 |
| Nature Center(s): ≤ 4 subcontracts each ≤ \$5000, for Schools for Pollinators | \$ 20,000 |
| Equipment/Tools/Supplies: | |
| Volunteer handtool repair/replace, gloves, safety glasses at \$0.30 per volunteer contact | \$ 1,600 |
| Horseshoe-pick style boot brush, 1 per volunteer @ \$2 ea | \$ 10,600 |
| Two (2) PlayCleanGo portable kiosks @ \$500 each | \$ 1,000 |
| Travel: | |
| ~60,000 miles, lodging, meals:travel between St. Paul and St. Peter offices, sites, schools, vendors, partners. | \$ 36,000 |
| Additional Budget Items: | |
| Volunteer Event expenses: Healthy food/bvg; table/chair/portable toilet/large tent rentals. 67% of the 5300 volunteers, at \$9/contact | \$ 32,000 |
| TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST = | \$ 383,600 |

V. OTHER FUNDS

| SOURCE OF FUNDS | AMOUNT | Status |
|---|--------------|-----------------|
| Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: | | |
| USEPA 319 Grant: Volunteer Engagement over 4 Levels, for Nicollet County / 7-Mile Creek Watershed | \$ 2,000 | Pending |
| Corporations and other private groups: Volunteer Engagement over 4 Levels | \$ 18,000 | Pending |
| 3M, Andersen Corporate, Best Buy Childrens, Ecolab, McNeely, Subaru, RBC Foundations: Field Learning for Teens | \$ 51,000 | Pending |
| Capital Region, Minnehaha Creek Watershed Districts: Field Learning for Teens | \$ 26,000 | Pending |
| US Fish and Wildlife Service: Schools for Pollinators | \$ 3,000 | Pending |
| Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: | | |
| BWSR Targeted Watershed for 7-Mile Ck Watershed Coord.: Volunteer Engagement 4 Levels. | \$ 2,500 | Secured |
| BWSR Targeted Watershed for 7-Mile Ck Watershed Coord.: Volunteer Engagement 4 Levels. | \$ 5,000 | Pending |
| In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: | | |
| NWTF (or similar) recruitment, mentoring programs for youth and adults: 'Hunt for Buckthorn'. | \$ 10,000 | Pending |
| Nature Centers have existing curriculum and outreach and educators: Schools for Pollinators | \$ 15,000 | Pending |
| USFWS existing Schoolyards for Habitat Program that includes staff time, mileage: Schools for Pollinators | \$ 10,000 | Pending |
| Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation: | | |
| M.L. 2016 \$509K (for Volunteers and Acres restored) ; M.L. 2017 anticipated at \$0K (pending). | \$ 424,000 | |
| Other Funding History: | | |
| ENRTF: M.L. 2003Bucks for Buckthorn \$255K; M.L. 2003 \$124K; M.L. 2005 \$100K; M.L. 2007 \$60K; M.L. 2008 \$111K; M.L. 2009 \$155K; M.L. 2011 \$400K; M.L. 2013 \$208K; M.L. 2014 \$300K; M.L. 2015 \$400K | \$ 2,113,000 | ENRTF: Prior |
| OHE: Metro Big Rivers (MBR): M.L. 2010 \$170K; M.L. 2011 \$150K; M.L. 2012 \$375K; M.L. 2013 \$210K; M.L. 2014 \$400K; M.L. 2015 \$400K; M.L. 2016 \$1,170K. Anoka Sand Plain (ASP) : M.L. 2010 \$747K; M.L. 2012 \$559K; M.L. 2014 \$901K, M.L. 2016 \$813K; M.L. 2017 \$345K (pending). | \$ 5,760,000 | OHE: Prior |
| | \$ 345,000 | Pending |

Engaging a Diverse Public in Ecological Restoration



4

Levels to engage younger and more diverse audiences as Restoration Volunteers

1. General Event Volunteer

No previous experience required

Be among 4,000 volunteers at large public Saturday events, weekday private events (for schools, places of worship, civic groups, corporations and others), and coordinated activities such as acorn and milkweed collection.

General volunteers receive

- All necessary equipment and training– ie. Techniques for native planting or invasive species removal
- Presentation and Q&A from an ecologist on the importance of the work they are doing, the ecology of the site, and the restoration plan
- Access to PlayCleanGo invasive species sanitation kiosks
- Volunteers also take home a boot brush / pick to raise the level of invasive species protocol.

2. Volunteer Supervisor

Receive advance training and information for a general volunteer event, and then lead work units of 5-10 restoration volunteers.

3. Site Monitor

Receive additional training for site-specific monitoring

4. Site Steward

Receive additional training and support to take semi-autonomous restoration and management actions at an adopted site.

Engage 900 teens of color in restoration and monitoring activities, through **Field Learning for Teens**



2016 RESULTS

Teens Involved: 220

DEMOGRAPHICS:

African American: 23%

Asian: 28%

Caucasian: 19%

Hispanic: 19%

Other/Multiracial: 11%

Field Learning for Teens introduces youth of color to the importance of environmental stewardship and the ways they can be involved in caring for our shared natural spaces - now and as future professionals. This program is unique in combining youth development with education in environmental science and technology. Through hands-on activities in the field, teens gain deeper exposure to the beauties and curiosities of nature. In addition, they have an opportunity to talk with community mentors and learn about careers in the environmental, ecology, and science and technology fields.



Nationally, the environmental movement has made significant strides in gender diversity, however progress has been limited in including diverse racial and ethnic voices. Great River Greening recognizes that our grassroots work to create healthy land and water in local communities affects diverse groups of people, and we recognize that our volunteers should represent the communities in which we work. Research also concludes that hands-on activities outside the classroom are one of the most effective ways to engage teens in science.

Engage 400 students, statewide, in **Schools for Pollinators**

in hands-on pollinator education, through pollinator garden installation with pollinator curriculum, restoration of pollinator habitat or citizen science monitoring of pollinators at local natural areas.



Great River Greening inspires, engages, and leads communities throughout Minnesota in conserving and caring for the land and water that enrich our lives.



GREAT RIVER GREENING

RESTORING LAND, WATER AND WONDER

Project Manager Qualifications

Wiley Buck (M.S., Conservation Biology, University of Minnesota) has 13 years of experience leading restoration projects and partnerships at Great River Greening. Wiley is a Program Manager, overseeing grants from Outdoor Heritage Fund and Trust, and partnerships including Anoka Sand Plain Partnerships and representing Greening on the Metro Conservation Corridors Partnership.. Wiley also currently manages several research and monitoring projects including oak ecotype growth and survival; the effects of conservation grazing on vegetation; and pollinator surveys at restoration sites. Wiley's restoration expertise builds upon prior experience with McHenry County Conservation District, The Nature Conservancy, Chicago Wilderness, and Minnesota DNR's Scientific and Natural Areas Program.

Organization Description

Since 1995, Great River Greening, has been implementing its “best in the business” volunteer program that provides opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to help improve natural resources throughout Minnesota. We have a track record of engaging 40,000 volunteers—12,000 of them youth—in hands-on education and stewardship work in nearly 400 communities across Minnesota. For the volunteers, we reach deep into and across the community, connecting with faith groups and places of worship, schools, civic groups, businesses, veterans groups—and even the Lynx and Timberwolves! With past support from the Minnesota Environmental Trust Fund and research by the University of Minnesota Humphrey Institute, we have elevated the educational component of our volunteer program and instituted evaluation procedures, as well as connecting it to a pyramid of deeper engagement. Our premier youth program, Field Learning for Teens, has similarly improved, and received a coveted Subaru of America award with a feature in their national magazine. An award from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation enabled us to expand our outreach to diverse communities, on which we continue to build. And in Seven-Mile Creek Watershed in Nicollet County, our demonstration of a farmer- and community-led watershed process received a Bush Foundation Innovation Grant, one of the only ones in the environmental field.

