

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

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 106-C

YES! Students Take on Minnesota Water Quality Challenge

Category: C. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ 213,700

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 2 years, July 2018 to June 2020

Summary:

Youth Energy Summit (YES!) expands its successful model to improve local waterways by mobilizing over 20 youth-led teams in Minnesota communities to complete water quality related projects, monitoring and reporting.

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Sponsoring Organization: Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center

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Web Address _____

Location

Region: Statewide

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

Since 2007 over 600 energy related projects were completed by a network of over 3,000 students in grades 7-12. Due to raised awareness of local water quality challenges, YES! students want to be part of the solution by completing over 30 new projects in local communities.

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



PROJECT TITLE: YES! Students Take on Minnesota Water Quality Challenge

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Youth Energy Summit (YES!) teams across the state will mobilize local watershed stewardship efforts in over 20 communities to help fill the urgent need for broad citizen participation to protect and clean-up Minnesota waters. This project extends the successful youth-led program into the summer and provides local water quality education in twenty communities. Teams of 5-20 youth, guided by a YES! Coordinator, will receive hands-on training from local natural resource professionals in the areas of aquatic invasive species (AIS), water quality monitoring and water quality improvement projects. Teams will then implement community awareness and mitigation projects and participate in on-water and shoreline activities to protect and improve local water quality. YES! is a youth-led, award-winning program that challenges and empowers students to solve environmental problems at the local level in partnership with their communities.

Through support from M.L. 2011, 14 and 16, YES! focused on energy and conservation education and projects. Completing over 600 action projects, YES! has demonstrated that youth can not only be a solution to today’s environmental challenges, they can be leaders in engaging their communities. For up to 20 teams, YES! will shift experiential learning opportunities to a clear focus on water quality. This project is a triple win for Minnesota – youth gain water quality knowledge, skills and career exposure; communities become more engaged and aware; and the state gains additional monitoring/testing data from its valuable waters.

Specific Goals for YES! Water Quality Project 2018-20:

- 30 or more new youth-led water quality and citizen science projects will be completed
- Up to 200 youth will engage 20 or more communities in water quality awareness and activities
- Over 20 valuable Minnesota water bodies over 2 years will be monitored, tested, and reported on for invasive species and contribute to DNR EDDMapS, Aquahunter and other data bases
- YES! teams compete for the statewide Water Quality Stewardship award and recognized publicly

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Recruit, Educate and Train up to 20 YES! Teams on Water Quality Challenges in Minnesota

Budget: \$ 72,000

Students will better understand water quality challenges in their local community and learn how they can be part of the solution. By partnering with local water quality experts, YES! students will receive training in AIS testing and reporting, Adopt-A-Drain, citizen science, water stewardship, and conservation best practices.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Recruit up to 20 existing YES! teams in over 30 communities to participate in citizen science, AIS monitoring and other water quality related project topics	Nov. 2018, 2019
2. Educate over 200 youth by connecting them to their local watershed experts (DNR, SWCD, MPCA, University of MN, lake associations) to learn about the challenges to their community’s specific watershed	May 2019, 2020
3. Train over 20 YES! teams through customized water quality workshops on AIS testing, Secchi disk reading, buffer restoration, and water stewardship best practices	Oct 2018, 2019



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2018 Main Proposal

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Activity 2: 20 YES! Teams Complete Over 30 New Water Quality Improvement Projects.

Budget: \$ 141,700

YES! Coordinators work with local experts to support YES! Teams to organize community events, supply watercrafts for on the water activities, and overall project support and guidance. Topics may include: Adopt-a-Drain, AIS testing, citizen science, Secchi disk readings, clean up events and visits to water treatment facilities.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Over 20 YES! Teams assess, identify, prioritize, and select local water quality projects	May 2019, 2020
2. Over 20 YES! Teams develop action plans and complete over 30 <u>new</u> water quality related action projects in partnership with their communities	June 2019, 2020
3. Over 20 YES! Teams partner with local watershed experts to implement community awareness and mitigation projects and participate in on-water and shoreline activities to protect and improve local water quality	Sept. 2018, 2019
4. Water Quality Stewardship award given to team with exemplary work to mitigate water quality challenges each year during the annual spring judging	June 2019, 2020

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

Project Team/Partners

The project partners include Prairie Woods Environmental Center, Laurentian Environmental Center, Ney Nature Center, and Lakes Country Service Cooperative. Partners will collaborate with their local watershed, county AIS Task Force, Soil and Water Conservation District, lake association, U of M/AIS Department, and other regional water quality experts. Prairie Woods ELC will serve as the fiscal host with Laurentian Environmental Center, Lakes Country Service Cooperative and Ney Nature Center providing contract services.

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy

With major assistance from ENRTF, YES! has developed a solid network of partners, students, educators, experts and a proven model for mobilizing youth-led environmental stewardship projects. YES! will utilize this successful model to impact water quality in watersheds throughout Minnesota. YES! teams bring education from workshops, tours and events back to their school and community through blog posts, school newsletters and hosting their own educational events, developing informed and engaged citizens for a lifetime. Project accomplishments are recognized and publicized via website, newsletters, conference presentations and local, regional and state-wide news media. This project will continue to build on the current fund development plan being implemented by YES! Staff and consultants.

C. Timeline Requirements

July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2020 allows YES! to adapt the model to water quality challenges and support teams in implementing water quality action projects across Minnesota for 2 consecutive school years. Staff, in the summer, will work with water quality experts to support students' efforts to complete on the water projects and waterway clean up events.

2018 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: YES! Students Take on Minnesota Water Quality Challenge

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET: 2 years

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Personnel: (1) 0.5 FTE Project Director \$62,800 total for two years (1) 0.25 FTE Team Coordinator \$26,000 two years (1) Administrative Assistant \$16,000 for two years (75% salary, %25 benefits for each position for 2 years)	\$ 104,800
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: Laurentian Environmental Learning Center (LEC) (1) 0.25 FTE Team Coordinator to facilitate water quality related projects and activities \$13,000/yr total \$26,000 for two years (Note: position projected to be part of a .5 FTE position supporting up to 10 teams in the northeast region of Minnesota). LEC will serve as fiscal host for the contract.	\$ 26,000
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: Ney Nature Center (NNC) (1) 0.25 FTE Team Coordinator to facilitate water quality related projects and activities \$13,000/yr total \$26,000 for two years (Note: position projected to be part of a .5 FTE position supporting up to 10 teams in the northeast region of Minnesota). NNC will serve as fiscal host for the contract.	\$ 26,000
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: Lakes Country Service Cooperative (LCSC) (1) 0.25 FTE Team Coordinator to facilitate water quality related projects and activities \$13,000/yr total \$26,000 for two years (Note: position projected to be part of a .5 FTE position supporting up to 10 teams in the northwest region of Minnesota). LCSC will serve as fiscal host for the contract.	\$ 26,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Boat rental as needed in some regions. In many regions boats will be provided through in-kind support (\$5,000). Supplies for events & workshops (\$5,000)	\$ 10,000
Travel: Coordinators & Project Director travel: 850 miles/month x 24 months = 20,400 miles x .535 = \$ 10,900 Note 1 : Travel required to support and meet with teams and partners and to coordinate activities in rural regions across the state of Minnesota Note 2: LCSC, NNC, LEC will cover a majority of their own travel within their region	\$ 10,900
Other: Project Seed Funds Allows for teams to purchase materials and services necessary to initiate projects for water quality and conservation related projects, events, monitoring, testing and reporting. \$500/team x 10 teams = \$5,000 x 2 years = \$10,000.	\$ 10,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 213,700

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: McKnight \$ 20,000 (secured); Will apply for a renewal grant (\$120,000 for 2 years) for 2018-20; Team registrations at \$550 x 40 teams x 2 years teams = \$ 44,000 (number of teams may vary); United Way of Kandiyohi County \$6,000 (pending); CUB Foods \$10,000 (pending) National Joint Powers Alliance (NJPA) \$1,000 (pending); sponsorships and foundation support projected at \$50,000 x 2 years = \$100,000)	\$ 181,000	2 secured 5 pending
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: 4-H Foundation grant \$4,500	\$ 4,500	pending
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: Adult expert volunteer in-kind is estimated at \$100,000 / Year = \$200,000 (based on previous years.) \$55,000 Prairie Woods ELC (including use of boats) for 2 years \$10,000 Laurentian Environmental Center for 2 years \$12,000 Ney Nature Center for 2 years \$10,000 Lakes Country Service Cooperative for 2 years \$50,000 Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District, Lake Associations, Kandiyohi County AIS Task Force, UofM, and other watershed districts and soil and water conservations districts for 2 years	\$337,000.00	4 secured several pending
Current ENRTF Appropriation: As of May 1, 2017 PWELC has approx. \$181,000 spent and \$219,000 remaining from M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 05c. Funds expected to be spent by June 30, 2018.	\$ 219,000	unspent
Past ENRTF Appropriation: M.L. 2011 First Special Session, Chp. 2, Art 3, Sec. 2, Subd. 08a = \$245,871 spent M.L. 2014 Chp. 226, Art. 3 Sec.2 Subd. 09b = \$320,000 spent	\$ 565,871	spent
Other Funding History (includes funding for the YES! program from 2007 to 2017, this project will be an extension of the original program); Southwest Initiative Foundation \$317,600; Minnesota Renewable Energy Marketplace \$202,000; McKnight Foundation \$110,000; AgStar \$25,000; Southern MN Initiative Foundation \$33,530; Bush Foundation \$10,000; SW Private Industry Council \$7,500; Great River Energy \$3,000; CEE \$1,500; Initiative Foundation \$2,500; Ney Nature Center \$6,500; Prairie Ecology Bus \$1,500; Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (RSDP) \$11,000; Northeast RSDP \$10,000; \$10,500 from other contributors; MPCA GreenCorps members (2 at Laurentian Environmental Center)	\$698,130.00	leveraged



www.youthenergysummit.org

YES! is ready to respond to the urgent need for broad citizen participation in efforts to protect and clean up Minnesota waters.

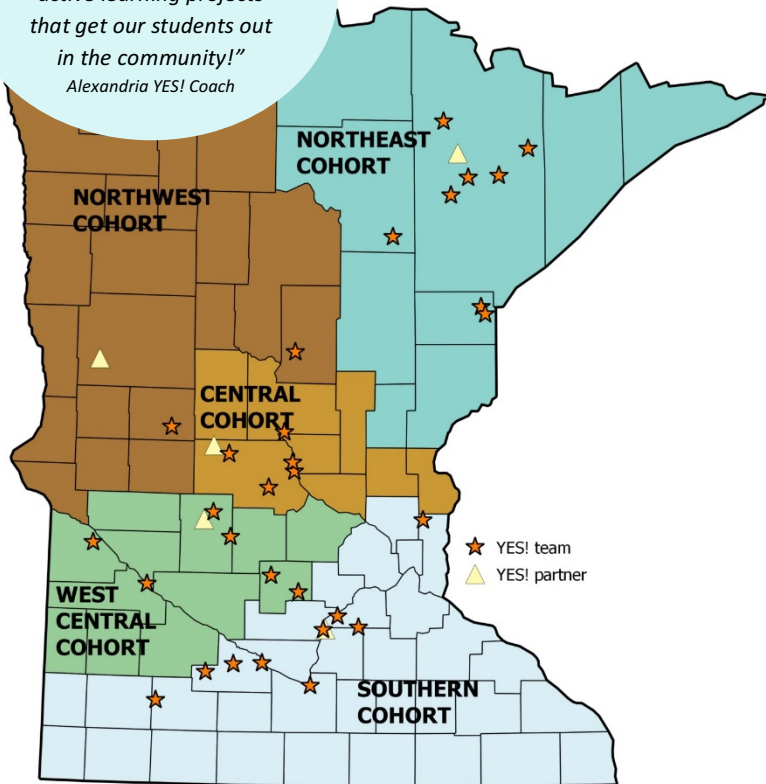


Expanding the successful YES! model to Water Quality Challenges is a triple win for Minnesota youth, their communities, and our valuable water resources.

Dave Pederson, Executive Director PWELC

YES! teams in 35' Voyager Canoe conduct Secchi disk readings at Saint John's University.

"The YES! model is a perfect fit for our school because it offers hands-on active learning projects that get our students out in the community!"
Alexandria YES! Coach



2016-2017 YES! Teams and Partner Sites



Carlton YES! team at Arrowhead Lake engage in aquatic ecology lessons.

YES! Water Quality Project 2018-2020

30 new projects...20 communities...20 water bodies

- Teams of 5-20 youth, guided by a YES! Coordinator, receive hands-on training from local natural resource professionals in the areas of aquatic invasive species, water quality monitoring and water quality improvement
- Up to 200 YES! students implement 30 NEW community awareness and mitigation projects to protect and improve local water quality in 20 communities
- Over 20 valuable Minnesota water bodies will be monitored, tested, and reported on for invasive species and contribute to DNR EDDMapS, Aquahunter and other data bases



2018-20 ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

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Organization Description:

Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center (PWELC) is a regional center for environmental education and outdoor recreation located 11 miles north of Willmar, MN in Kandiyohi County. The mission of Prairie Woods is to promote an individual and shared commitment to the responsible use, management and preservation of our natural resources. PWELC began offering programs in 1995 and now serves over 25,000 people annually from over 60 schools and many youth organizations and conservation groups within a 100 mile radius.

PWELC is a 501c3 non-profit organization, with an annual budget of approximately \$700,000, which operates day-use and outreach programs from a beautiful 500 acre facility owned by Kandiyohi County. PWELC enjoys strong partnerships with local and state government agencies, school districts, camps, youth service agencies, conservation groups, foundations and private businesses throughout the region.

PWELC recently hosted the Smithsonian Waterways Exhibit and has operated with 100% net renewable energy since 2010. Since 2007, PWELC has expanded its outreach capacity through the Youth Energy Summit (YES!), Yellow Boats Project and Project Eco-Voyageur. PWELC's outreach programs provide unique learning and service experiences to students within their own communities. Eco-Voyageur, focusing on water quality and conservation, introduces students to local lakes or rivers from the seats of a 34 foot voyageur canoe. The YES! program will serve over 20 communities operating with four regional partners with the assistance of an ENRTF grant. YES! has received the 2017 MN Ethical Leadership award and Minnesota Environmental Initiative awards in 2010 and 2013.

Project Manager Qualifications:

Shelli-Kae S. Foster serves as the YES! Program Manager. She has a master of business administration (MBA) in Sustainable Business and undergraduate degree in Communications from Gustavus Adolphus College. For the last 7 years Foster has managed the 2011, 2014 and 2016 ENRTF grant reporting, YES! staff and daily operations. As a former YES! coordinator, Foster developed the central region to include 10 teams and helped the program earn the Environmental Initiative Award for Environmental Education in 2013.

Previously to working with Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center and the YES! program, Foster worked as Sustainability Manager for School District 206/Alexandria, MN, managed the Green Team at Tastefully Simple, Inc, produced "Minnesota's Environment and You" (LCMR grant) for Twin Cities Public Television and produced programming for major corporations including American Express, Carlson Marketing Group, Securities Training Corporation and Blue Zones (formally Earth Treks).