

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

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 121-C

River Watch on the Minnesota River

Category: C. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ 103,000

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

Summary:

Continue and expand a River Watch program on the Minnesota River engaging teams of high school students in water quality monitoring and reporting the data to the MNPCA

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Location

Region: Southwest

County Name: Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Carver, Chippewa, Dakota, Lac qui Parle, Le Sueur, Nicollet, Redwood, Renville, Scott, Sibley, Swift, Yellow Medicine

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

Map of the Major Watersheds of the Minnesota River Valley

_____ 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: [Continue and Expand River Watch on the Minnesota River]

PROJECT TITLE: Continue and Expand River Watch on the Minnesota River

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The Minnesota River contributes over 80% of the sediment being deposited in Lake Pepin and other areas of the Mississippi River. There is no basin-wide Minnesota River entity collecting data and overseeing goals for river sediment reduction or for water quality improvement. Some current MNPCA monitoring sites are monitored as infrequently as once every two-five years.

Water will be monitored for nitrates, dissolved oxygen, phosphorous, clarity, bacteria, sediment content, and flow levels will also be recorded. All data will be reported to the MNPCA.

Friends of the Minnesota Valley has planned and will launch a River Watch program with six high school based teams during the 2017-2018 school year. Each team will conduct monthly water quality monitoring on the Minnesota River. Data will be collected in accordance with MNPCA protocols and will be reported to the MN PCA. All high schools in the basin were contacted and over 20 schools expressed interest in participating but only six can participate due to limited funding. This project will increase participation to 20-25 school teams.

Friends has fully planned the first year of operation. Training for the leaders of the six teams is scheduled for August, and the 2017-2018 program will provide experience improve the program for expansion.

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 to be successfully addressed. Friends of the Minnesota Valley River Watch program, limited to six teams due to limited funding, is modeled after the highly successful River Watch program operated by the International Water Institute on the Red River.

Overall GOALS

One: Conduct monthly water quality monitoring using PCA protocols and report the data to MNPCA to enable state and local units of government to make data drive decisions to improve water quality and reduce sediment transfer.

Two: Increase in the amount of reliable water quality data to policy makers and the public.

Three: Engage students and the public in a water quality improvement project.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1. Building on the 2017-2018 program, recruit at least 15, up to 20, additional High School teams and train the team leaders guided by the Red River program and the experience gained during the 2017-2018 year. This work will be performed by the Program Manager

Activity 2. Purchase two additional YSI Sonde water quality monitoring Probes to be shared by the newly recruited teams.

Activity 3. Plan and conduct monthly water quality monitoring and reporting at three or more locations per team. A major planning task is the selection of monitoring sites in conjunction with the team leader. This work will be overseen by the program manager who will accompany the team to each test site on each monitoring occasion.

Activity 4. Plan and convene two annual Minnesota River Basin Wide Forums at which all teams will present their experiences, report their data, and share data analysis. All state and local water quality policy makers and all other elected officials will be invited along with news media.

Budget: \$10,000



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2018 Main Proposal

Project Title: [Continue and Expand River Watch on the Minnesota River]

Activity 1: (Recruit 15 additional River Watch teams and train team leaders)

Insert a clear and concise explanation of the activity you are proposing to do here.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Produce materials and make contact with every high school in the MN River Basin	May 1, 2019
2. Identify and train team leader for each team retrain existing team leaders	August 15, 2019

Activity 2: (Purchase two YSI Sonde probes and accessories)

Budget: \$13,000

Insert a clear and concise explanation of the activity you are proposing to do here.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Equipment will be purchased for shared use by teams,	June 1, 2019

Activity 3: (Plan and conduct Water Quality Monitoring)

Budget: \$60,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. At least three monitoring sites identified for each team	June 1, 2019
2. Conduct monthly monitoring at each site and report the data to MNPCA	June 30 2020

Activity 4: (Plan and convene two annual River Watch forums)

Budget \$20,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Plan and convene first annual forum	June 1, 2019
2. Plan and convene second annual forum	June 1 2020

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Friends of the Minnesota Valley -Ted L. Suss, Executive Director oversight; Julie Beatty, Project Manager; Committed Partners: Izaak Walton League of Minnesota-funding; Water Resources Center MN State Mankato-technical assistance; Lower Minnesota River Watershed District-funding; MN PCA technical assistance, monitoring protocols, and accepting data; International Water Institute-technical assistance and program guidance. High Schools: Shakopee, Belle Plaine, Jordan, Sleepy Eye St Mary’s, Lac Que Parle, Waseca. Additional partnerships with other watershed districts are being sought.

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy

Based on the experience of the Red River Valley, the River Watch program will produced a great deal of needed data on water quality that is trusted by all agencies due to the quality control and the unbiased nature of adult led, student generated data collection. Because this is a student project, public attention of water quality issues will be greatly increased.

Friends of the Minnesota Valley is implementing a limited “test year’ River Watch program during 2017-2018 using its own resources plus funds contributed by the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District. If this project is funded by the LCCMR, the program will be able to operate during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years on a much larger scale, 20 schools instead of six schools. Friends is actively seeking additional funding from foundations and through regular appeals to past Friends donors and members.

C. Timeline Requirements

Phase one of this project is the planning conducted since January 1, 2017 by the River Watch Program Manager and the 2017-2018 “test year” which is also being overseen by the Program Manager.

Phase two will be operation of the program with the initial six teams plus an additional 15 teams recruited during phase one if funding is available.

Phase three will be the 20 team p[rogram operated with ENRTF funding.

2018 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Continue and Expand River Watch on the Minnesota River

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET Two years

BUDGET ITEM (See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses", p. 13)	AMOUNT
Personnel: No employed staff will be funded with ENRTF funds	NA
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: Project Manager, the selected person will be experienced in program management specifically water quality or natural resources management. This person will be responsible for training, monitoring oversight, reporting oversight, team recruitment, and planning of the forums	\$ 60,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Purchase of two YSI Sonde Multi Function Water Monitoring Probes and related accessories	\$ 13,000
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>	NA
Travel: <i>Program Manager instate travel, mileage and lodging, to numerous monitoring sites within Minnesota River Basin on a monthly basis. Cost estimated based on analysis of expected team locations and expected monitoring locations for each team.</i>	\$ 10,000
Additional Budget Items: Cost of convening two basin wide forums including attendance by all teams. Costs include reimbursement of team busing expense for team member attendance, hall rental, meals for students and adult leaders. Cost estimate is based on experience gained from convening seven Minnesota River Congress basinwide meetings.	\$ 20,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 103,000

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: Friends of the Minnesota Valley \$10,000 each year from organizational budget. This expenditure will purchase staff time of the Executive Director to oversee the program.	\$ 20,000	Secured
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: <i>Non Applicable</i>	\$ -	NA
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: Office space and incidental office expenses at \$200 per month for 48 months	\$ 4,800	Secured
Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation: None	\$ -	NA
Other Funding History: Friends will have expended approximately \$35,000 during the 2017 planning phase and the 2017-2018 "test Year". Source of funds, Friends budget \$25,000 Lower Minnesota River Watershed District, \$10,000	\$ 35,000	



Friends of the Minnesota Valley
River Watch Project
Project Manager Qualifications

The River Watch Project Manager will be Ted L. Suss, Executive Director of Friends of the Minnesota Valley. He will have overall responsibility for assuring that the River Watch program is a success and that all requirements of the ENRTF are met in full. His qualifications are as follows:

Mr. Suss is the Project Manager of another ENRTF project, Morton Canoe Landing which will be completed June 30, 2017. In this capacity, he has developed a familiarity and understanding of the ENRTF program requirements, the progress reporting requirements, and the expectations of the LCCMR.

Mr. Suss served 12 years as a School Superintendent and another 14 years as a school administrator. In these positions, he developed skills of budget development and management, fiscal controls, Purchasing, Human Resources administration, and contract management. Twenty six years of experience as a school administrator has given Mr. Suss an in depth understanding of how schools operate, and how a program such as river Watch can successfully be integrated into the school curriculum. This experience has already made it possible to recruit the initial six teams that will participate in the 2017-2018 River Watch program.

The Program Manager for River Watch will be Julie Beatty. Ms. Beatty has a Master's Degree in Landscape Architecture and will manage the River Watch Program under contract with Friends of the Minnesota Valley. Ms. Beatty focused her Master's Thesis on Water Quality Management in the Minnesota River Basin.

Ms. Beatty has managed the planning for the launch of the River Watch Program, She has met with staff from the International Water Institute, attended River Watch Team Leader training, completed a YSI Sonde monitoring training, has arranged for River Watch data submission to the MNPCA, and has handled recruitment of the original six high school teams.

Friends of the Minnesota Valley
Organization Description

Friends of the Minnesota Valley is a 501c3 organization with a Mission to preserve and protect the natural resources of the Minnesota Valley. The Friends was formed in the 1970s and received its 501c3 status approval in 1988.

Friends of the Minnesota Valley has completed numerous restoration projects in the Minnesota River Valley including restoration wetlands and wet meadows.

A committee of Friends was instrumental in securing legislative approval of a bonding proviso to develop a section of the Minnesota Valley State trail from the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center to the Bloomington Ferry Bridge.