

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund 2019 Request for Proposals (RFP)

Project Title:**ENRTF ID: 189-E**

Advancing Renewable Energy through Education and Community Engagement

Category: E. Air Quality, Climate Change, and Renewable Energy**Sub-Category:****Total Project Budget: \$** 860,520**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** June 30, 2021 (2 yrs)**Summary:**

Minnesota is in the midst of a shift in electric generation to renewable energy. Rural energy discussions will educate and enable an orderly transition to meet Minnesota's clean energy goals.

Name: Beth Soholt**Sponsoring Organization:** Wind on the Wires**Title:** Executive Director**Department:****Address:** 570 Asbury Street, Suite 201

St. Paul MN 55104

Telephone Number: (651) 644-3400**Email** bsoholt@windonthewires.org**Web Address** www.windonthewires.org**Location****Region:** Central, Northeast, Southwest, Southeast**County Name:** Aitkin, Becker, Benton, Big Stone, Blue Earth, Cass, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Crow Wing, Dodge, Douglas, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Hubbard, Lac qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Mower, Murray, Ni**City / Township:****Alternate Text for Visual:**

Counties that will be part of the Rural Energy Discussions.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Funding Priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multiple Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge Base
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extent of Impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific/Tech Basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urgency
<input type="checkbox"/>	Capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leverage	<input type="checkbox"/>	TOTAL <input type="checkbox"/> %
<input type="checkbox"/> If under \$200,000, waive presentation?							



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) 2019 Main Proposal Template

PROJECT TITLE: Advancing Renewable Energy through Education and Community Engagement

PROJECT STATEMENT: By the year 2035, Minnesota has the potential to see nearly 70 percent of its current electricity generation retire. Generation currently provided by coal and nuclear facilities may be replaced, affecting communities where these facilities currently operate. Renewable energy (wind and solar), energy storage, other emerging technologies, and more transmission lines are the replacement front-runners to serve Minnesota customers. Communities that have good wind and solar resources will play an integral role in the generation shift taking place in Minnesota.

Rural Minnesota is likely to be the host of many of the new wind and solar farms, generating electricity for Minnesota's population. In many communities, the public needs information to understand the benefits and burdens of hosting renewable energy projects. Without good information and conversation, local residents may not understand the benefits (tax revenue, job creation, increased economic development, etc.) energy production can play in communities. For instance, parties that do not want to see change in a community may create and fund opposition to renewable energy development in an effort to stop new projects in rural Minnesota. Siting new renewable energy projects can be a difficult task once communities are inundated with misinformation.

Rural residents and communities have the potential to learn and provide input to renewable development in their communities that will help Minnesota meet its electrical energy needs. Wind on the Wires and The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy are proposing conversations (Rural Energy Dialogues) about Minnesota's energy future in four regions of the state to help aid the state's transition to renewable energy.

Rural Energy Dialogues will use the innovative and time-tested Citizens Jury method developed by the Jefferson Center for community problem solving and leadership development. This approach, which starts in local high schools through working with, among others, Future Farmers of America (FFA), will bring together a microcosm of the community to study renewable energy in-depth and generate a shared community response. This approach has consistently provided a productive, educational, and inclusive way to address complex or divisive challenges. Each Rural Energy Dialogue focuses on a specific region and gathers a randomly selected but demographically representative group of citizens for a two-day moderated study and deliberation forum. They are tasked with creating a shared community vision around the opportunities for hosting or sourcing renewable energy projects in their region.

More resources are needed to work on the electric generation transition taking place in Minnesota. It is critical that Minnesota develop and implement a coordinated, long-term, multi-faceted approach to addressing these challenges as we move away from centralized electricity generation to a more decentralized system of renewable energy. This proposal for several regions of Minnesota (south and central) has three primary outcomes:

1. Provide a forum to educate local residents on the facts about renewable energy development including wind and solar projects;
2. Proactively build public support for renewable energy project development;
3. Help ensure renewable energy project development keeps pace with customer demand.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

ENRTF Budget: \$516,312

Activity 1: Community Discussions: Convene local Rural Energy Discussions, which are education/outreach opportunities.

One session will be scheduled annually per region (total of 8 for grant cycle) – targeting areas based on upcoming and ongoing development as well as power plant retirements and other pertinent region, state and Midwest information. The Institute for Agricultural and Trade Policy (IATP) will conduct "Citizens Jury" sessions as part of a two-day dialogue to gather the community's views on renewable energy production in their community. These sessions will be open to all and selection of participants by IATP will allow a good cross section of the community. County commissioners, economic development officials, community residents, farmers and other key regional stakeholders will participate. Each session will develop statements on regional values. The goal of the juries is to sample the voice of the region and gain input on hosting or sourcing renewable energy projects. Public meetings and other educational opportunities will be held after the conclusion of the jury to educate the region about the jury's findings. It is estimated this format will reach over 150,000 people during the grant cycle, including both in-person sessions, media/communications work and access to the renewable energy resource center. Priority areas within the state would focus on 4 regions, Central, Central West, Southeast, and Southwest.

ENRTF Budget: \$172,104

Activity 2 Sharing Regional Reports and Disseminating Results: Proactively build support for regional renewable energy projects and Minnesota's generation shift by sharing the results of the Citizen Jury reports through regional communication with the media, service organizations, and public information sessions. A goal of this activity will be to develop teams of regional renewable energy advocates who will speak on behalf of the regional benefits of developing renewable energy and serve as "boots on the ground" at community events.



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) 2019 Main Proposal Template

ENRTF Budget: \$172,104

Activity 3: Renewable Energy Resource Center: To create a resource hub and information exchange for use by regions. This section will create a repository of peer-reviewed, factual information on renewable energy. The materials will be available electronically by individuals, community leaders, economic development officials and others interested in learning about renewable energy. A link to renewable energy experts will also be available where questions will be answered within 24 hours.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. 8 community Citizen Jury reports.	June 30, 2021
2. Share Regional Reports and disseminate information to assist with Minnesota's generation shift.	June 30, 2021
3. Create and staff Renewable Energy Resource Center – a resource and information center on renewable energy.	June 30, 2021

III. PROJECT PARTNERS:

A. Partners receiving ENRTF funding

Name	Title	Affiliation	Role
Ben Lilliston	Director of Rural Strategies and Climate Change	Institute for Agricultural Trade and Policy	Conduct Rural Energy Discussions
C. Daniel Meyers	Assistant Professor	Political Science Department, University of Minnesota	Community Evaluations
Andrew Rockway	Program Director	Jefferson Center	Design and implement Rural Energy Discussion

B. Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding

Name	Title	Affiliation	Role
Mike Bull	Director Policy and External Affairs	Center for Energy and Environment	Wind on the Wires Board of Directors, Project Advisor
Electric utilities serving the regions	Community Outreach Coordinators	Pertinent Utility Employees	Receive local community input from public information meetings.

IV. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:

Consumers, corporations, and policy makers are leading the push to transition our electricity system to more renewable energy. Many Minnesota utilities are adding renewables (wind and solar) because it makes economic sense for the utility's shareholders as well as its ratepayers. Minnesota also has renewable energy requirements and goals and utilities have done a good job meeting Minnesota's Renewable Energy Standard in a timely and cost effective manner.

Utilities are starting to study and plan for retiring significant amounts of existing generation over the next 10-15 years. New resources like wind, solar, and storage will need to be sited around the state of Minnesota as replacement resources. Communities and landowners in Minnesota are being approached by developers to host renewable projects. Additional education is needed at the local level for decision makers and other stakeholders to understand the generation shift that is taking place in Minnesota and to have a conversation about siting new renewable generation.

The activities outlined above set Minnesota on a course to replace existing generation with renewable energy. If the activities are successful, placement of new renewable projects will be welcomed in communities as part of the long-term plan of the state and resource plans by the electric utilities. Future funding for this initiative will be sought from various sources including LCCMR, foundations supporting non-profit organizations, electric utilities, renewable energy developers and supply chain companies, individual donors and others.

V. TIME LINE REQUIREMENTS:

First Quarter FY 20: (1) Hire Community Outreach Coordinator to work across the four regions impacted by this grant. Hire by end of July 2019; (2) Identify 8 key communities for Rural Energy Dialogue; (3) Develop master schedule for Rural Energy Dialogues; (4) Implement first Rural Energies Dialogue; (5) Evaluations for first session conducted by University of Minnesota; (6) Disseminate information from first session with community engagement sessions; and (7) Set up Renewable Energy Resource Center format, begin building resource materials from sessions and fact sheets about renewable energy.

Quarters Two through Four FY 20: (1) Implement Rural Climate Discussions in 3 more communities; (2) Evaluations conducted by U of M; (3) Host community engagement sessions; (4) Staff renewable Energy Resource Center, update and add to resources.

FY 21: (1) Continuation of activities described in quarters two through four in FY 20.

2019 Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

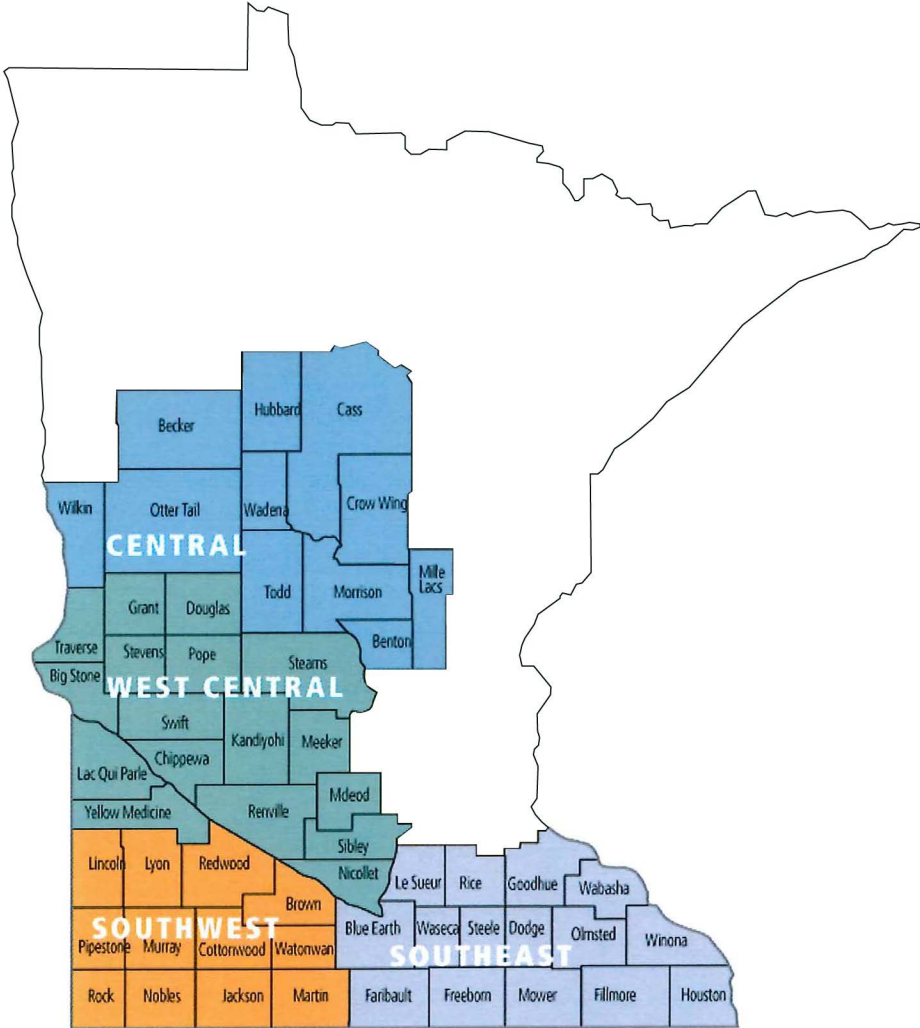
Project Title: Energy Transition and renewable Energy Champions

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

BUDGET ITEM (See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses")	AMOUNT
Personnel:	
Operations Director	\$ 200,000
Project Administrative Coordinator	\$ 100,000
Communications Manager	\$ 80,000
Community Outreach Coordinator	\$ 150,000
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:	\$ 295,520
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	\$ 10,000
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):	\$ -
Travel:	\$ 25,000
Additional Budget Items:	\$ -
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 860,520

V. OTHER FUNDS *(This entire section must be filled out. Do not delete rows. Indicate "N/A" if row is not applicable.)*

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:		
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:		
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:		
Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation:	\$ -	
Other Funding History:	\$ -	



WOW Key Staff

Beth Soholt, Executive Director

Beth Soholt is the Executive Director of the non-profit organization Wind on the Wires (WOW). WOW is the Midwest's premier organization focused on driving the development of renewable energy by applying technical expertise, and by expanding markets and building support in the Midwest. Launched in 2001, WOW members include non-profit clean energy and environmental advocacy organizations, wind and solar developers, wind turbine manufacturers, tribal representatives, and businesses that provide goods and services to the wind and solar industries. The WOW footprint covers 9 states that stretch from the Dakotas to Indiana. WOW is a key regional partner of the American Wind Energy Association. Beth is responsible for guiding WOW's work in the areas of transmission planning, state regulatory proceedings, legislative policy, and education/outreach and serves on the board of directors. She holds a seat on the Midwest Independent System Operator (MISO) Advisory Committee representing the Environmental Sector. Prior to WOW, Beth worked at the Izaak Walton League of America's Midwest Office on deregulation and regional transmission issues, Mahlum & Associates Law Firm on energy issues, Minnesota State Senate as a senior staff member to Senator Richard Cohen, and Mid-Continent Area Power Pool (predecessor to MISO) as staff to the Environmental Committee and Operating Committee. Beth holds a law degree from Hamline University Law School, St. Paul, Minnesota, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. Beth also serves on the Board of Climate Generation.

Peder Mewis, Regional Policy Manager-West

Peder Mewis is the Regional Policy Manager for states in the western footprint of the Midcontinent ISO –Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Peder manages the organization's advocacy efforts throughout the West region and effectively represents the interests of the wind energy industry before various state legislatures and executive branches. Peder brings a unique ability to collaborate with a diverse mix of stakeholders to accomplish shared goals, helping to drive new markets for renewables in the Midwest.

Peder Mewis joined Wind on the Wires in 2018 after nearly 12 years of professional experience working for the Minnesota State Senate. Peder comes to WOW with great proficiency in the Minnesota legislative process, an advanced understanding of energy and utility law, and firmly established relationships with both political parties. During his time working for the Senate Republican Caucus, Peder served in a variety of roles, most recently, as caucus researcher for the Transportation and Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee, and the Energy and Utilities Finance and Policy Committee. In 2011-12, Peder served as the Administrator for the Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee.

Sean Brad, Regional Policy Manager-East

Sean specializes in utility regulatory analysis on state and federal issues. With over 16 years of experience in the utility industry he has worked at the Illinois Commerce Commission as a staff attorney in the General Counsel's office and as a senior policy advisor to Commissioners Lieberman and Elliott. Sean has been with WOW for over seven years. He manages renewable energy policy, advocacy and litigation that is before regulatory, judicial and legislative bodies in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Michigan. Sean also manages renewable energy policy and advocacy in transmission planning committees at MISO.

Sean lives in Illinois and takes advantage of the variety of opportunities the state has created for residential customers to control their carbon footprint and energy usage, and to self generate. Sean purchases energy at real time rates, has utilized the energy efficiency optimization tools promoted by the state, has added a smart thermostat to his home, and he owns, operates, and sells energy from a solar generation facility on his property. Sean earned his law degree from IIT/Chicago-Kent College of Law, his Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Illinois-Chicago, his bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana and is a licensed attorney and professional engineer in the State of Illinois.

Kelley Welf, Communications Manager

As Communications Manager for Wind on the Wires, Kelley develops and manages internal (member) and external communications, facilitates media requests and interviews, and directs other communications initiatives that further the organization's mission. Kelley has been developing a speakers bureau that now includes a broad list of validators who can speak on a range of clean energy issues. She has been successful in arranging editorial board meetings, setting up press conferences, drafting and placing commentaries/LTEs and other earned media outreach efforts for the Minnesota Clean Energy & Jobs campaign, the PTC effort with the American Wind Energy Association, and the Minnesota Clean Power Plan roll-out. In addition, Kelley has worked to develop public education materials, such as: fact sheets, newsletters and other documents to clearly and effectively articulate the benefits of clean, renewable energy for key decision-makers.

Kelley is a graduate of Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications.