

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2020 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 127-C

Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Supplemental Teaching Staff

Category: C. Environmental Education

Sub-Category:

Total Project Budget: \$ 252,898

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: June 30, 2023 (3 yrs)

Summary:

The Jay C. Hormel Nature Center would like to offer its environmental education curriculum to more southeast Minnesota students by hiring an additional naturalist and interns for three years.

Name: Luke Reese

Sponsoring Organization: City of Austin

Job Title: Director/Naturalist

Department: Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department

Address: 1304 21st St NE
Austin MN 55912

Telephone Number: (507) 437-7519

Email luke.reese@hormelnaturecenter.org

Web Address: http://www.hormelnaturecenter.org

Location:

Region: Southeast

County Name: Mower

City / Township: Austin

Alternate Text for Visual:

Three photos: Tapping a maple with 4th graders. 1st graders sharing the soil discoveries. 7th graders fascinated by a hatchling turtle. 10 and 25 miles from HNC.

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



PROJECT TITLE: Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Supplemental Teaching Staff

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Following completion of a new Interpretive Center in 2017, demand for school, children’s and family programs has increased at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center (HNC). Schools that do not make early requests are turned away. This project will expand the HNC environmental education program to surrounding communities in greater Mower County and southeast Minnesota by funding a new teacher/naturalist for 3 years and one intern per year for three years. Those employees would be tasked with scheduling up to 80 additional school groups (over 1600 students) and 15 additional summer programs for each of the three years of this grant, proving that the demand exists for such programming.

Since 1988, HNC has provided environmental education curricula to *every* Austin Public or private school student for the first eight years of their education, K – 7th grades. This grant would expand that opportunity to more schools in the surrounding area. In 2018, HNC staff provided 172 classes to 4,961 students from Austin and other public/private schools. Programs are made possible by partnerships between the City of Austin, schools, The Hormel Foundation, the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center, and other local nonprofits. Curricula were developed by the former Director in conjunction with local science teachers to meet state standards. Currently, we are not able to expand the environmental education programs because we are limited by staffing resources, as each class requires two teachers; a full-time staff member and an intern.

In 2017, the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center opened a new interpretive center that more than doubled our teaching and exhibit spaces. It was funded by the Hormel Foundation, Friends of the Hormel Nature Center, the City of Austin, the Hormel Foods Charitable Trust, and by private donations. Though the new building greatly expanded teaching spaces, staffing remained the same. Thus, hiring additional staff will allow HNC to provide our high-demand environmental education to additional schools in the surrounding communities (Albert Lea, Hayfield, Lyle, Grand Meadow, Blooming Prairie, NRHEG, LeRoy, Southland, etc.) to participate in our programs. No other opportunities like this exist within a 25 mile radius of Austin and few (Quarry Hill Nature Center, Riverbend Nature Center, and Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center) within a 50 mile radius. For a long time HNC has provided environmental education with few resources. It is time to demonstrate the reach and positive impact these programs have to southeastern MN by providing more classes and programs to meet the needs of students in southeast Minnesota.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1 Title: Expand Environmental Education Opportunities with Additional Intern

Description: The objective of this activity is to provide additional educational programming to surrounding communities by hiring an additional environmental educator / naturalist for three years, as well as an intern, on a one-year term for each of the three years of the grant, to assist the environmental educator / naturalist with programming. The educator and intern will use curricula that is already developed. The curricula are tied to state science standards and include the following themes: nature discovery, seasons, five senses, living vs. non-living nature, seed dispersal, animal habitat requirements, tree anatomy (maple syruping), winter survival, and aquatic macroinvertebrates. Summer curricula themes expand on these ideas and include: monarch butterfly life/migration, radical raptors, canoeing/kayaking, fish ecology, climbing, water programs, nature at night, sounds of nature, and nature art, photography, and music.



**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)
2020 Main Proposal Template**

Activities will be evaluated by surveying teachers and adjusting programming to meet individual school or class requirements. A log will be kept to track the numbers and origins of classes participating in programs.

ENRTF BUDGET: \$252,898.64

Outcome	Completion Date
<i>1. Schedule at least 80 additional school groups for the 2020-21 school year.</i>	<i>June 2021</i>
<i>2. Provide 15 more summer programs than were provided in the summer of 2020.</i>	<i>August 2021</i>
<i>3. Maintain 250+ school groups attending HNC programs for the 2021-22 school year.</i>	<i>June 2022</i>
<i>4. Provide at least 45 summer programs for the 2021 summer.</i>	<i>August 2022</i>
<i>5. Maintain 250+ school groups attending HNC programs for the 2022-23 school year.</i>	<i>June 2023</i>
<i>6. Provide at least 45 summer programs for the 2022 summer.</i>	<i>August 2023</i>

III. PROJECT PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS:

- **Austin Public Schools and other participating schools – bussing and fees**
- **Friends of the Hormel Nature Center – fund the annual intern and specific program supplies**
- **The Hormel Foundation -- \$45,000 annually for the education programs**
- **Mower Soil and Water Conservation District – staff and scientists help teach the 7th grade water ecology curriculum**
- **Minnesota Pollution Control Agency -- staff and scientists help teach the 7th grade water ecology curriculum**
- **Austin Audubon – Helps with bird programming and provides summer scholarships.**
- **Austin Chapter of the Izaak Walton League – Funds an entomologist to visit 7th grade classes to prepare for the water ecology field trip.**

IV. LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:

Once hiring is completed, new staff would immediately work to expand the environmental education programming by scheduling additional schools from nearby communities. Historically, schools stay committed to participating in our programs after their initial encounter with the environmental education programming. We also have a robust evaluation process where staff survey participating teachers to ensure that the students’ needs are met and that the program adequately fit expectations and standards. This critical feedback allows updates and modifications to the programming for each individualized school. The ability for HNC to customize the programming makes our programming unique and valued by school districts.

This grant will also serve as a pilot project to prove the environmental education demand and that we can successfully meet the needs of more of the region’s schools. After the grant period, HNC would, with local and regional organizations’ support, commit to permanently funding these positions.

V. SEE ADDITIONAL PROPOSAL COMPONENTS:

- A. Proposal Budget Spreadsheet**
- F. Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description**
- G. Letter or Resolution**

Attachment A: Project Budget Spreadsheet
 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
 M.L. 2020 Budget Spreadsheet



Legal Citation:

Project Manager: J. Luke Reese

Project Title: Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Supplemental Teaching Staff

Organization: City of Austin; Parks, Recreation, & Forestry Department; Jay C. Hormel Nature Center

Project Budget: \$252,899

Project Length and Completion Date: 3 years until June 30, 2023

Today's Date: March 8, 2019

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Budget	Amount Spent	Balance
BUDGET ITEM			
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)	\$ 252,898	\$ -	\$ 252,898
3-Year Permanent (\$17/hr+3% annually, FICA 6.2%, MED FICA 1.45%,PERA 7.5%, \$5100 health)			
July 2020-June 2021 Intern (\$13/hr, FICA 6.2%, MED FICA 1.45%,PERA 7.5%, \$5100 health)			
July 2021-June 2022 Intern (\$13.25/hr, FICA 6.2%, MED FICA 1.45%,PERA 7.5%, \$5304 health)			
July 2022-June 2023 Intern (\$13.50/hr, FICA 6.2%, MED FICA 1.45%,PERA 7.5%, \$5516.16 health)			
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment/Tools/Supplies			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Capital Expenditures Over \$5,000			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Fee Title Acquisition			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Easement Acquisition			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Professional Services for Acquisition			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Printing			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Travel expenses in Minnesota			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
COLUMN TOTAL	\$ 252,898	\$ -	\$ 252,898

SOURCE AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT	Status (secured or pending)	Budget	Spent	Balance
Non-State:		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Friends of the Hormel Nature Center -- Inservices x 3 years	Pending	\$ 3,000		
Friends of the Hormel Nature Center -- Mentorship program x 3 years	Pending	\$ 12,000		
School contributions - fees: 80 addl. Groups x 20 students/group x \$5/student	Pending	\$ 8,000		
School contributions - bussing: 80 addl. Groups x \$100/bus	Pending	\$ 8,000		
State:		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
In kind:		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
City of Austin - Grant administration and supervision (10% of Director's time) x 3 years	Secured	\$19,541		
City of Austin - Supplies July 2020-June 2023	Pending	\$7,500		
Teaching volunteers (150 opportunities x 4 hours x \$13/hr) x 3 years	Secured	\$23,400		
Special program volunteers (245 opportunities for 667 hours x \$10/hr) x 3 years	Secured	\$20,010		
Other ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS AWARDED IN THE LAST SIX YEARS	Amount legally obligated but not yet spent	Budget	Spent	Balance
		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Supplemental Teaching Staff



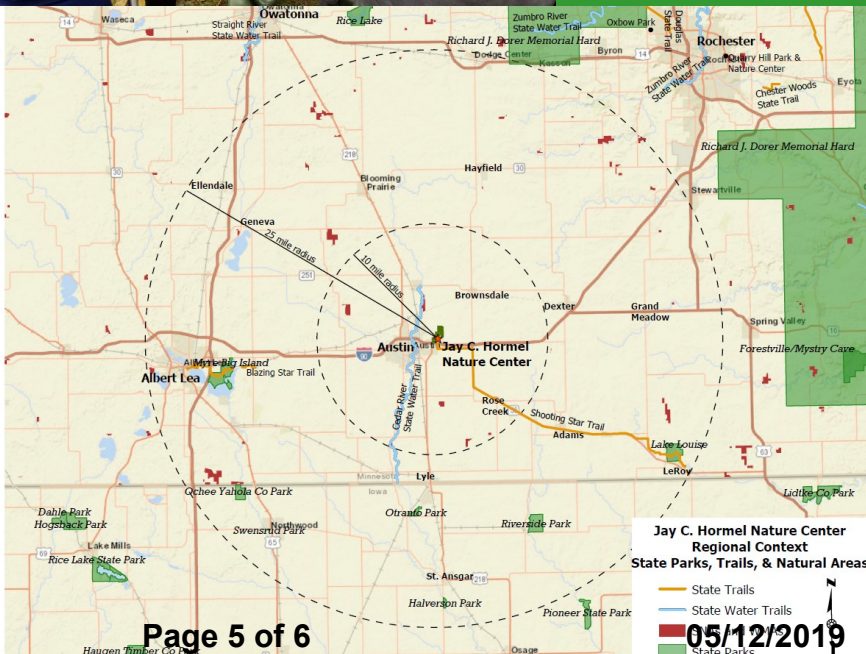
- Established 1971
- Owned and operated by the City of Austin
- 518-acres of land
- New \$6.8 million Interpretive Center completed in 2017



- Taught 185 classes to 4,961 SE MN students in 2018
- Pre-K through 7th grade curricula in place for over 30 years
- Provides ~30 summer classes and ~70 community programs annually
- HNC staff cannot meet the demand from all schools requesting environmental education



- Curricula topics follow state science standards and include: nature discovery, seasons, five senses, living vs. non-living nature, seed dispersal, animal habitat requirements, tree anatomy (maple syruping), winter survival, and aquatic macroinvertebrates.
- Summer curricula themes, for ages 6 months to 18 years, include: monarch butterfly lifecycle, raptors, canoeing, fishing, climbing, water quality, nature at night, sounds of nature, and nature art and music.



This project will:

- Build capacity to reach more students at more schools in greater Mower County and Southeast Minnesota
- Fund 1 naturalist for three years
- Fund 3 additional interns for 1-year increments
- Serve as a pilot project to prove the environmental education demand and show that we can meet the needs of more of the region's schools.

Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Supplemental Teaching Staff

Organization / Project Manager Qualifications

Name: J. Luke Reese

Title: Director / Naturalist

Organization: City of Austin; Parks, Recreation, & Forestry Department

Experience:

- 2.5 years at the Hormel Nature Center
- BS from the University of MN in Forest Resources
- 6.5 years teaching environmental education in Minnesota and Arizona
- 1 year teaching 7th grade science in Arizona
- 6.5 years of experience with land management in Minnesota and Arizona
- Manage a staff of:
 - 3 full-time permanent
 - 2 part-time permanent
 - 2 full-time temporary
 - 1 part-time temporary
 - 15-20 mentees
 - ~80 volunteers
- Receive and/or administer grants from:
 - The Hormel Foundation
 - MN DNR – Conservation Partners Legacy Grant
 - Austin Area Foundation
 - Freeborn-Mower Operation Round Up
 - The Small Change Foundation
- Serve on or report to the following boards/committees:
 - Austin Parks and Rec board
 - Friends of the Hormel Nature Center
 - Cedar River Watershed Citizens' Advisory Committee
 - Spruce Up Austin Board
 - We Are Water MN – Host Site Team
- Working on the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission's Regionally Significant Park Designation. Anticipated completion date: July 2019

Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Established: 1971

Land base: 518 acres Miles of trail: 10+

New Interpretive Center Opened April 2017

Program/event highlights:

- 4,961 children attended programs with their schools in 2018
- 14,798 participants in all nature center program in 2018
- Held the 35th Annual Halloween Warm-Up in cooperation with the Matchbox Children's Theater
- Provide summer programming for 6 month olds to senior citizens
- In 2018, 19 mentees ages 13-18 provided over 720 hours of support to our summer programming
- Rent canoes, kayaks, cross-country skis, and snowshoes.
- Receive support from the 501(c)3 Friends of the Hormel Nature Center.
- Applied to and received a high ranking for receiving a Regionally Significant Park Designation from the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission. We expect to receive the designation during the summer of 2019.
- Have received two Conservation Partners Legacy grants from the DNR through the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center