

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

Project Title:**ENRTF ID: 137-CH**

YES! Students Take on Water Quality Challenge Phase-II

Category: H. Proposals seeking \$200,000 or less in funding**Sub-Category:** C. Environmental Education**Total Project Budget:** \$ 199,700**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** June 30, 2022 (2 yrs)**Summary:**

YES! teams statewide will mobilize local watershed stewardship efforts in 20 communities through student-driven action projects, filling the urgent need for citizen participation to protect and clean-up Minnesota waters.

Name: Shelli-Kae Foster**Sponsoring Organization:** Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center**Job Title:** Program Director**Department:** Youth Eco Solutions (YES!)**Address:** 12718 10th Street NE
Spicer MN 56288**Telephone Number:** (320) 354-5894**Email** shelli-kae@yesmn.org**Web Address:** www.prairiewoodselc.org and www.yesmn.org**Location:****Region:** Statewide**County Name:** Statewide**City / Township:****Alternate Text for Visual:**

Visual includes photos of students participating in 3 water related action projects, map of partners and YES! teams, 2 student quotes, and a lit of completed projects during phase I.

_____ 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) 2020 Main Proposal Template

PROJECT TITLE: YES! Students Take on Water Quality Challenge - Phase II

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Youth Eco Solutions (YES!) is a student-driven, award-winning program that challenges and empowers students to solve ecological challenges through hands-on projects. Since 2007 YES! has supported over 3,500 students in working with 6,500 businesses, organizations and community members, to impact an additional 110,000 students. Our goal with the proposed project is to mobilize Minnesota youth to partner with local watershed experts in over 20 communities to help fill the urgent need for broad citizen participation to protect and clean-up Minnesota waters.

PWELC is seeking \$199,700 to build on our past experience with water related projects to implement the 3- Step Water Awareness method developed during Phase I. This method includes the following: 1) student and coach orientation to aquatic invasive species (AIS) and training in water quality surveying techniques, 2) student-driven surveying and monitoring of local water bodies, and 3) student organized public education events. This project is a triple win for Minnesota – youth acquire water quality knowledge, skills and career exposure; communities become more engaged and aware; and the state gains valuable monitoring/testing data from its waterways.

During the first part of Phase I, the number of water quality related projects completed by students more than doubled from 12 to 32! Projects include: water quality testing and evaluation, public events on water quality and peer education, design and planting of rain gardens, local lakeshore and river restoration and clean-up, storm water awareness, collection and reuse, building aquaponics systems, AIS monitoring and reporting, tracking of water usage, and water pollution reduction demonstrations through solar boat design and build. Project Guides created by teachers will serve as models for projects in Phase II. YES! works in partnership with Ney Nature Center and Laurentian Environmental Learning Center to bring this successful program to Minnesota's youth.

Specific Goals for YES! Students Take on Water Quality Challenge Phase - II:

- Complete 30 or more new student-driven water quality and citizen science projects and public events.
- Mobilize over 200 youth and 20 communities in local water quality issues and partnering with an additional 2,000 community or more community members.
- Improve over 20 valuable Minnesota water bodies by monitoring, testing, and reporting data. Data will contribute to the DNR EDDMapS.
- Partner with local experts to provide 10 customized water quality workshops and trainings.
- Recognize accomplishments through statewide Water Quality Stewardship award competition

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1 Title: Recruit, Educate, and Train YES! Students in the 3-step Water Awareness model

Description: Building on our past experience, YES! students will learn from local and state water quality experts to complete up to 20 water quality and conservation projects. To raise community awareness of water quality best practices in the local community, students will participate in the 3-step Water Awareness method to complete water related improvements identified in their community. Students will take a pre- and post-evaluation to determine program effectiveness.

ENRTF BUDGET: \$ 81,365



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

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Recruit over 200 YES! students in over 20 communities to identify, evaluate, prioritize, and select local water quality projects	Nov. 2020, 2021
2. Educate and prepare over 200 youth on the 3-step Water Awareness method of: 1) student and coach orientation and training, 2) student surveys of local water bodies, and 3) public awareness through events and presentations	May 2021, 2022
3. Train over 20 YES! teams through customized workshops on AIS testing, Secchi disk reading, buffer restoration, Adopt-a-Drain, and other water stewardship best practices	Oct. 2020, 2021

Activity 2 Title: Taking Action – Over 30 New Student Driven, Hands-on Water Quality and Conservation Projects and Public Events Completed in Minnesota

Description: Building on the successful YES! model of connecting local experts and community resources with student identified water quality challenges in their community, YES! will connect students with local water quality experts to complete projects that will improve water bodies in their region. Over 20 YES! teams will partner with local watershed experts to implement community awareness and mitigation projects and participate in on-water and shore land activities to protect and improve local water quality.

ENRTF BUDGET: \$ 118,051

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Engage over 20 YES! teams to identify, prioritize, and select local water quality projects in their watershed	Nov. 2020, 2021
2. Mobilize over 200 students to develop action plans and complete over 30 <u>new</u> water quality related action projects in partnership with their communities, including events	June, 2021, 2022
3. Partner with local watershed experts to implement the 3-Step Water Awareness method and deliver to up to 10 communities through local events of on-water and shore land activities to protect and improve local water quality	Sept. 2020, 2021
4. Recognize student achievements through the Water Quality Stewardship award given to the team demonstrating exemplary work to mitigate water quality challenges each year	May 2021, 2022

III. PROJECT PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS:

The project partners include Prairie Woods ELC, Laurentian Environmental Center, and Ney Nature Center. Partners will collaborate with their local watershed districts, county AIS Task Forces, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, lake associations, and U of M/Extension and AIS Department. Prairie Woods ELC will serve as the fiscal host with Laurentian Environmental Center and Ney Nature Center fulfilling contract services.

IV. LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:

With major assistance from ENRTF, YES! has developed a solid network of partners, including students, educators, experts and community stakeholders. YES! will use its award-winning program to directly impact water quality in watersheds throughout Minnesota. YES! student teams bring what they have learned from workshops, tours and events back to their school and community through blog posts, school newsletters and their own educational events, developing informed and engaged citizens for a lifetime. YES! alumni testify that environmental engagement stays with them for a lifetime. Many alumni are now employed in watershed districts, utilities, government, and school districts. Other past supporters of YES! include McKnight Foundation, Bush Foundation, Initiative Foundations, Waste Management, Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, local businesses, corporate sponsorships, and individuals.

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

Legal Citation:

Project Manager: Shelli-Kae S. Foster

Project Title: YES! Students Takes on Water Quality Challenge - Phase II

Organization: Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center

Project Budget: \$199,700

Project Length and Completion Date: 2 years, June 30, 2022

Today's Date: April 11, 2019



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Budget	Amount Spent	Balance
BUDGET ITEM			
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)	\$ 124,700	\$ -	\$ 124,700
(1) ~ 0.70 FTE Project Manager at \$86,800 total cost for two years . 75% salary, 25% benefits each year for 2 years. Note: Project Manager will provide support to teams in Northwest & North Central regions.			
(1) ~ 0.3 FTE Team Coordinator at \$27,500 per year to coordinate and lead Water Awareness & water quality project initiatives. 75% salary, 25% benefits for 2 years.			
(1) ~0.10 FTE Administrative Assistant at \$10,400 for two years; 75% salary, 25% benefits each year for 2 years.			
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts			
Professional Service Contract: Laurential Environmental Learning Center (1) 0.25 FTE Regional Coordinator to facilitate Water Awareness Method and water quality related project; \$ 13,000/year, total \$ 26,000 for 2 years. Contract will be single sourced due to previous relationship and experience.	\$ 26,000	\$ -	\$ 26,000
Professional Service Contract: Ney Nature Center (1) 0.25 FTE Regional YES! Team Coordinator to facilitate Water Awareness Method and water quality related projects; \$13,000/year, total \$26,000 for two years . Contract will be single sourced due to previous relationship and experience.	\$ 26,000		\$ 26,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies			
Supplies for events and workshops and travel (substitute teacher & mileage) for student teams to attend events & workshops. Boat rental as needed in some regions. In many regions boats will be provided through in-kind support.	\$ 8,000	\$ -	\$ 8,000
Travel expenses in Minnesota			
Coordinators & Project Director travel: 500 miles/month x 24 months = 12,000 miles x .58 = \$7,000 Note 1 : Travel required to support and meet with teams and partners and to coordinate activities in over 20 communities across the state of Minnesota. Note 2: NNC& LEC will cover a portion of travel within their region	\$ 7,000	\$ -	\$ 7,000
Other			
Project Seed Funds; Allows for teams to purchase materials and services necessary to initiate projects for water quality and conservation related projects, events, and event registrations to raise awareness, monitoring, testing and reporting. Up to \$400 per team x 10 teams = \$4,000 x 2 years = \$8,000.	\$ 8,000	\$ -	\$ 8,000
COLUMN TOTAL	\$ 199,700	\$ -	\$ 199,700
SOURCE AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT	Budget	Spent	Balance
Non-State: School fees 20 teams x \$600	\$ 24,000	\$ -	\$ 24,000
In kind: PWELC \$24,000 + LEC \$5,000 + NNC \$ 10,000 for 2 years = ; Student volunteer time average is 327 hrs per team x 20 teams for 2 yrs at \$13/hr = \$85,400; Teacher volunteer time average is 98 hrs per team x 20 teams for 2 yrs at \$35/hr = \$68,600; Professional/expert volunteer time average is 33 hrs per team x 20 teams at \$45/hr = \$29,700. Above in-kind is based on previously quantified data.	\$ 222,700	\$ -	\$ 222,700
Other ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS AWARDED IN THE LAST SIX YEARS	Budget	Spent	Balance
M.L. 2018 05c YES! Students Take on Water Quality Challenge	213,000	37,713	175,287
M.L. 2016 05c Youth-Led Sustainability Projects in 50 MN Communities – Phase III	400,000	339,980	60,020
M.L. 2014 09b Youth-led Sustainability Initiatives in 40 Greater MN Communities	350,000	319,782	30,218
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

YES! Students Take on Water Quality Challenge – Phase II

Building on the successful YES! model, YES! will bring the 3-Step Water Awareness method to over 200 students to improve over 20 Minnesota water ways while partnering with over 2,000 community members and businesses

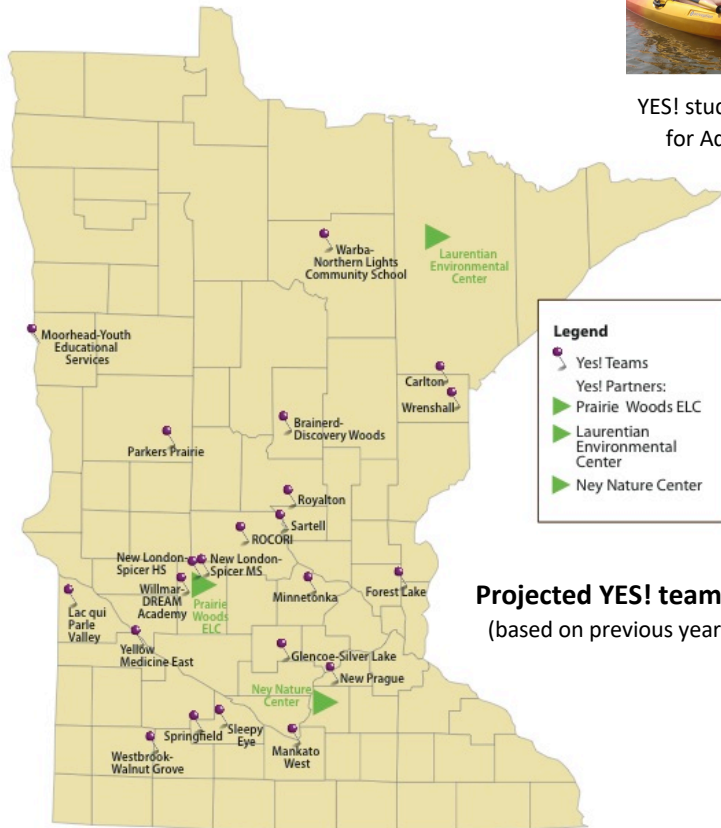


YES! students monitor Lake Ringo for Aquatic Invasive Species



YES! students planting a rain garden in Stearns County

- Complete 30 new student-driven water quality projects
- Engage and train over 200 youth in 20 communities about local water related issues
- Improve 20 or more valuable Minnesota water bodies



Projected YES! teams for 2020-22
(based on previous years participation)



YES! students stencil storm drains around Forest Lake community

“What’s great about storm drain stenciling is that it sends a message that will reach a diverse and large number of community members. I took part in the project because there’s value in maintaining a healthy watershed”
-Forest Lake YES! student

Projects Completed During Phase I (Year 1 of 2 year project data)

- 5 water quality testing and evaluation projects
- 4 water-related educational events and peer lessons
- 4 rain gardens designed and planted
- 3+ local lakeshores and rivers cleaned
- 2 aquaponics systems built
- 2 AIS lake monitoring and reporting projects
- River monitoring and data collection
- Shoreline restoration
- 15 storm drains stenciled
- Water usage tracking
- Storm water collection and reuse projects
- Native garden & restoration



2020-22 ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

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

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, watershed districts, school districts, camps, youth service agencies, conservation groups, foundations and private businesses throughout the region.

PWELC 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 Eco Solutions (YES!) program, 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 Director. She has a master of business administration (MBA) in Sustainable Business and undergraduate degree in Communications from Gustavus Adolphus College. For the last 8 years Foster has managed the 2011, 2014, 2016, and 2018 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.

Previous 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).