

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

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 142-CH

Connecting 350 Northeastern Minnesota Students to Boundary Waters

Category: H. Proposals seeking \$200,000 or less in funding

Sub-Category: C. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ 184,050

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

Summary:

This project will connect over 350 Northeastern Minnesota Students and young adults to the Boundary Waters through wilderness canoe experiences and conservation stewardship programs.

Name: Chris Knopf

Sponsoring Organization: Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

Job Title:

Department:

Address: 401 N 3rd Street, Ste 290

Minneapolis MN 55401

Telephone Number: (612) 332-9630

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Web Address: friends-bwca.org

Location:

Region: Northeast

County Name: Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, St. Louis

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

Canoe of students in canoes and a map of Minnesota with the five Northeastern Minnesota counties circled.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| _____ 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: Connecting >350 Students Minnesota to Boundary Waters

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Minnesota has the Boundary Waters. Arizona has the Grand Canyon. Wyoming has Yellowstone. The Boundary Waters is our national gem.

Although approximately 200,000 people visit the Boundary Waters each year, it is a place that many Minnesotans have not visited, even for people who live near the Boundary Waters. In our ongoing community conversation meetings in Northeastern Minnesota, we have become aware that many high school students and young adults from the region have not been in the Boundary Waters on multi-day wilderness experiences, even though the Boundary Waters is “in their backyard.” This project aims to address this situation by connecting over 350 high school students and young adults from Northeastern Minnesota (Koochiching, Itasca, St. Louis, Lake, and Cook counties) to the Boundary Waters through two activities:

- **Wilderness canoe experiences:** Multi-day wilderness canoe experiences in the Boundary Waters for at least 255 high school students from Northeastern Minnesota over a three-year period, focusing on outdoor skills, leadership development, and self-reliance.
- **Wilderness conservation stewardship volunteers:** Supporting at least 100 young adults (high school graduates/college students ages 18-24 years old) from Northeastern Minnesota over a three-year period to serve as wilderness conservation stewardship volunteers working in coordination with wilderness rangers from the Superior National Forest to perform trail maintenance, campsite, and habitat restoration. The participants will receive training on the proper use of saws and other equipment, in addition to developing outdoor skills.

To implement these activities, the Friends is hiring a Community Advocate staff person in Northeastern Minnesota, ensuring no LCCMR funds from this grant will be used to pay for any Friends staff. We will leverage our experience and relationships from two of our current successful programs in order to ensure the success of this project. For the last fifteen years, we have provided scholarships for approximately 50-70 students from the Twin Cities metro region to experience the Boundary Waters. For the last eight years, we have partnered with the Superior National Forest to provide daily stipends for volunteers who clear portages, clean campsites, and restore habitat.

Minnesota will benefit from this project as these students and young adults develop leadership skills, self-reliance, and an enhanced conservation ethic.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Provide 255 Students from Northeast Minnesota with Outdoor Wilderness Experiences in the Boundary Waters

Description:

This activity will provide scholarships to 255 high-school students from Koochiching, Itasca, St. Louis, Lake, and Cook counties to experience a multi-day wilderness canoe trip in the Boundary Waters. These students will develop leadership skills and learn how to be self-reliant in the outdoors through hands-on activities, such as canoeing, portaging, building a fire, pitching a tent, and fishing.

The Friends is currently seeking out a NE Minnesotan to hire as a Community Advocate staff member in Northeastern Minnesota to partner with local high schools and civic organizations throughout Northeastern Minnesota to identify and recruit high school students to receive scholarships to experience a multi-day wilderness canoe trip in the Boundary Waters. The Friends will also partner with Northeastern Minnesota camps, and Ely and Grand Marais outfitters to provide these wilderness canoe



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

trips. We will leverage our experience and relationships from our existing program that currently provides scholarships for students from the Twin Cities Metro region to experience wilderness canoe trips.

ENRFT Budget for Activity 1: \$153,000

| Outcome | Completion Date |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>1. Provide 75 high school students from Northeastern Minnesotans with outdoor wilderness experiences in the Boundary Waters</i> | <i>9/1/2021</i> |
| <i>2. Provide 85 high school students from Northeastern Minnesotans with outdoor wilderness experiences in the Boundary Waters</i> | <i>9/1/2022</i> |
| <i>2. Provide 95 high school students from Northeastern Minnesotans with outdoor wilderness experiences in the Boundary Waters</i> | <i>9/1/2023</i> |

Activity 2: Support Over 100 Wilderness Conservation Stewardship Volunteers from Northeastern Minnesota in the Boundary Waters

Description:

The Friends is hiring a Community Advocate staff member in Northeastern Minnesota to identify and recruit young adults (high school graduates/college students ages 18-24 years old) from Koochiching, Itasca, St. Louis, Lake, and Cook counties to perform trail maintenance and campsite and habitat restoration in the Boundary Waters working in coordination with wilderness rangers from the Superior National Forest. This activity will help build the next generation of wilderness conservation stewards and aid career development in conservation.

This activity builds upon our existing Wilderness Conservation Stewardship program with the Superior National Forest in which we provide stipends to the participants for their work (\$30/day, \$210/week). The participants are provided housing by the Superior National Forest or wilderness camping for the week. We will reach 25 young people in the first year, 35 in the second year, and 45 in the third year. We will partner with community colleges, UMD, folk schools, and other educational institutions to recruit and select participants in this program.

ENRFT Budget for Activity 2: \$31,050

| Outcome | Completion Date |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>1. Support 25 conservation steward volunteers from Northeastern Minnesotans in the Boundary Waters wilderness</i> | <i>9/1/2021</i> |
| <i>2. Support 35 conservation steward volunteers from Northeastern Minnesotans in the Boundary Waters wilderness</i> | <i>9/1/2022</i> |
| <i>3. Support 45 conservation steward volunteers from Northeastern Minnesotans in the Boundary Waters wilderness</i> | <i>9/1/2023</i> |

III. PROJECT PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS:

Superior National Forest and its wilderness rangers.

IV. LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:

The Friends currently receives private donations from individuals and private foundations to support our existing programs that provide scholarships to students for wilderness canoe trips and stipends for wilderness conservation stewards. We will leverage the LCCMR grant to attract additional private donations to enable continuation of this project that focuses on participants from Northeastern Minnesota.

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

Legal Citation:

Project Manager: Chris Knopf

Project Title: Connecting Over 350 Students and Young Adults from Northeastern Minnesota to the Boundary Waters

Organization: Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

Project Budget: \$184,050

Project Length and Completion Date: 38 months; September 1, 2023

Today's Date: April 15, 2019



| ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET | | Budget | Amount Spent | Balance | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| BUDGET ITEM | | | | | |
| Personnel (Wages and Benefits) | | | \$ - | \$ - | |
| | | | | | |
| Professional/Technical/Service Contracts | | | | | |
| | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | |
| Equipment/Tools/Supplies | | | | | |
| Saws and other maintenance equipment; gloves and protective clothing | | \$ 9,000 | \$ - | \$ 9,000 | |
| Capital Expenditures Over \$5,000 | | | | | |
| | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | |
| Fee Title Acquisition | | | | | |
| | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | |
| Easement Acquisition | | | | | |
| | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | |
| Professional Services for Acquisition | | | | | |
| | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | |
| Printing | | | | | |
| | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | |
| Travel expenses in Minnesota | | | | | |
| | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | |
| Other | | | | | |
| Scholarships for wilderness canoe experiences (\$600/student x 255 students) | | \$ 153,000 | \$ - | \$ 153,000 | |
| Stipends for wilderness conservation stewards (\$210/week/volunteer x 105 volunteers) | | \$ 22,050 | \$ - | \$ 22,050 | |
| COLUMN TOTAL | | \$ 184,050 | \$ - | \$ 184,050 | |
| | | | | | |
| SOURCE AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT | | Status (secured or pending) | Budget | Spent | Balance |
| Non-State: | | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - |
| State: | | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - |
| In kind: NE Minnesota Community Advocate Staff Person (0.25 FTE x 3 years) | | Secured | \$ 47,000 | \$ - | \$ 47,000 |
| (\$50,000 salary, + 25% benefits = \$62500/year) | | | | | |
| Other ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS AWARDED IN THE LAST SIX YEARS | | Amount legally obligated but not yet spent | Budget | Spent | Balance |
| 2019 recommended LCCMR appropriation | | | \$ 450,000 | \$ - | \$ 450,000 |

The Boundary Waters Is Our Backyard

Connecting High-School Students and Young Adults from Northeast Minnesota to the Boundary Waters



While many Minnesotans are familiar with the Boundary Waters, it is a place that many have not visited, even for people who live near the Boundary Waters. This project connects over 350 high-school students and young adults from Koochiching, Itasca, St. Louis, Lake, and Cook Counties to the Boundary Waters through wilderness canoe experiences and conservation stewardship programs.

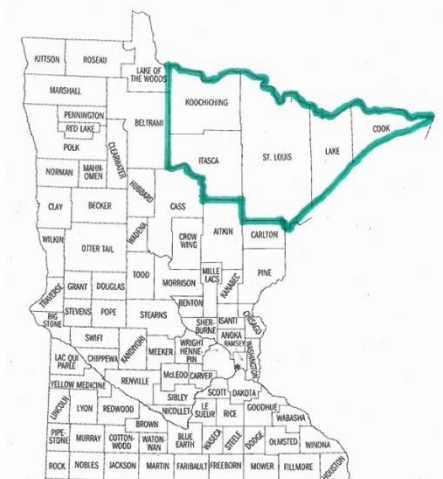
Program Components

Wilderness canoe experiences for 255 high-school students from northeast Minnesota.

- Scholarships for students to have multi-day wilderness canoe experiences
- Develop leadership skills and learn how to be self-reliant
- Partner with local schools and civic organizations

Wilderness conservation stewardship volunteer opportunities for over 100 young adults from northeast Minnesota.

- Daily stipends to young adults (ages 18-24 years old) to work with wilderness rangers from the Superior National Forest to clear trails, maintain campsites, and restore habitat



Grant Applicant: Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness is a Minnesota 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has worked for over 40 years to protect and connect people to the Boundary Waters.



Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness
401 N. Third Street, Suite 290, Minneapolis, MN 55401 • 612.332.9630
www.friends-bwca.org

Project Manager Qualifications

Project Manager, Chris Knopf, is the Executive Director of Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness. For more than 25 years, Chris has worked to protect, preserve, and restore our wild places. Prior to joining the Friends, Chris practiced environmental attorney and served as a state director for The Trust for Public Land. He graduated from Georgetown University and received his J.D. from University of Virginia School of Law.

Organization Description

The mission of Friend of the Boundary Waters Wilderness (the “Friends”) is to protect, preserve and restore the wilderness character of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and the Quetico-Superior ecosystem. The Friends was established in 1976 to help bring full wilderness protection to the Boundary Waters, culminating in the passing of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act in 1978. Our work focuses on protecting the Boundary Waters from activities that erode its wilderness character and working to ensure that the Superior National Forest and broader Quetico-Superior ecosystem are managed according to sound conservation principles. The Friends also fosters the next generation of Boundary Waters outdoor enthusiasts by connecting students and young adults to the Boundary Waters through wilderness canoe experiences and wilderness conservation volunteer programs.