**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).