



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2021 Request for Proposal

## General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2021-240

**Proposal Title:** Engaging Diverse Low-Income Residents with Minnesota's Parks

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Trina Adler

**Organization:** U of MN, Extension Center for Family Development

**Office Telephone:** (612) 390-1879

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## Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** This project offers culturally relevant experiences and barrier reduction efforts for diverse and low-income residents to engage with Minnesota's natural resources for health, mental flourishing and career exploration.

**Funds Requested:** \$568,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** 2024-06-30

**LCCMR Funding Category:** Environmental Education (C)

## Project Location

**What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?**

Statewide

**What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?**

Statewide

**When will the work impact occur?**

During the Project and In the Future

## Narrative

**Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.**

U of MN Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Education (SNAP-Ed) provides health and nutrition education to 13,000 low income residents annually, including 46% people of color, with expertise in engaging low-income, diverse audiences with highly trained and diverse staff. SNAP-Ed values outdoor-engagement for improving mental flourishing, increasing father involvement in children's health, increasing healthy food access, and preventing/improving chronic health conditions. Additionally, through its 4-H Outdoor Wilderness Leadership and Service (OWLS) program, Extension helps youth develop natural resources literacy and environmental stewardship.

2017 focus groups of Latino residents documented fear, unaffordability, lack of transportation, lack of culturally appropriate outreach, and lack of education as primary barriers to utilizing State Parks. SNAP-Ed refugee and immigrant participants anecdotally report unfamiliarity with State Parks, low plant and wildlife literacy, and lack of fishing and hunting skills and knowledge. In 2017 only 5.1% State Park visitors were from non-white/Hispanic backgrounds, and only 29% with incomes less than \$60,000.

Minnesota DNR prioritizes diversifying State Park visitors as well as staff, and marketing Parks as health-beneficial facilities. Through positive collaborative engagement, SNAP-Ed and other Extension programs serving low-income, diverse communities can contribute to these priorities.

**What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? i.e. What are you seeking funding to do? You will be asked to expand on this in Activities and Milestones.**

Funding is requested for the following collaborative (Extension and DNR) strategies, adapted for cultural responsiveness, in alignment with the Spectrum of Prevention Framework:

**Strengthening Knowledge and Skills:** Implement the evidence-based "Walk with Ease" program at State Parks for safe walking with nature benefits; Implement the "Hook and Cook", "Hike and Cook", and "Camp and Cook" family-based class series to increase knowledge and skills of diverse, low income participants for outdoor activities, food and health (e.g., preparing fish, mindfulness, nourishment for physical exertion, open-fire cooking); Implement the 2-year "OWLS" program in a culturally responsive manner

**Promoting Community Education:** Implement the Park Rx program in a culturally responsive manner through SNAP-Ed and other Extension programs.

**Educating Providers:** Engage Conservation Corps workers from diverse, low-income backgrounds to develop and educate diverse community partnerships for promotion of nature-engagement.

**Fostering Coalitions and Networks:** Establish a statewide Strategy team to facilitate system and policy changes to reduce barriers and improve accessibility of State Parks for low income, diverse residents

**Changing Organizational Practices:** Explore State Park day-pass check-out systems with libraries, food shelves, schools, etc.

**Influencing Policy and Legislation:** Explore providing State Park day-use annual passes to households receiving EBT, WIC or other benefits

**What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?**

375 diverse, low-income Minnesotans will participate in educational/experiential series for skill and knowledge development leading to improved physical and mental flourishing, healthy food access, and increased natural resources literacy

125 diverse, low-income teens will participate in OWLS to learn about Minnesota's wildlife and State Parks, explore outdoor and wildlife careers, and engage in environmental stewardship

The Park Rx program is implemented through SNAP-Ed, other Extension programs and community organizations

Systems and policy changes are implemented to increase accessibility of State Parks and reduce barriers for low income and diverse residents of Minnesota to enjoy them.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Implement 20 educational/experiential series for skills, knowledge, healthy habits, and promotion of environmental stewardship related to Minnesota’s natural resources

**Activity Budget:** \$440,748

**Activity Description:**

Plan and implement 20 collaborative educational or experiential series from the following options, with participation by 500 low income, diverse Minnesotans, facilitated by U of MN Extension, Minnesota DNR, and relevant partner organizations, with built-in feedback loops from participants to ensure cultural responsiveness:

“Walk with Ease” CDC’s evidence-based walking program. This will be implemented through SNAP-Ed at State Park locations with participants at risk of chronic health conditions with supplemental educational content from DNR.

“Hook and Cook”, “Hike and Cook”, Camp and Cook” - family-based programs developed by U of MN Extension and MN DNR. These are series of classes for developing skills in outdoor activities and related health, food and nutrition skills (e.g., preparing fish and wild game, nourishment for physical exertion, mindfulness, cooking over open fire)

“OWLS” - intensive, hands-on, adventure-based program for youth to deepen knowledge, skills and leadership capabilities around the wilderness/outdoors, explore career opportunities in the outdoor industry, and plan and lead conservation efforts. This 2-year program will be delivered to cohorts in 5 regions throughout the state, coordinated by Conservation Corps members with DNR and Extension youth development. A state park within each region will serve as the program's learning center.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Completion Date
Establish collaborative planning teams in MN locales where Extension is engaging low-income, diverse participants	2021-12-31
Implement 20 educational/experiential collaborative learning series	2024-01-31
Complete and analyze post-program evaluations	2024-06-30

### Activity 2: Convene a statewide Strategy Team to pursue systems and policy changes for accessibility of State Parks to low-income, diverse Minnesotans

**Activity Budget:** \$127,252

**Activity Description:**

A statewide strategy team will be formed to propose and support organizational system and policy changes to facilitate accessibility of State Parks for low-income, diverse Minnesotans through reducing barriers and facilitating familiarity and comfort with Minnesota’s natural resources. This team, which will include low-income, diverse Minnesotans as well as organizational representatives, will meet regularly with an agreed upon frequency, and will be responsible for the following:

Supporting and advising the integration of culturally responsive elements and barrier reduction adaptations for familiarizing low-income/diverse participants of Extension programs with Minnesota’s natural resources and state parks; Supporting and advising the Conservation Corps volunteers to involve them in facilitating community engagement in and coordination of culturally relevant learning programs and systems to build access, skills, knowledge and healthy lifestyle habits related to Minnesota’s natural resources;

Identifying stakeholders, programs, organizations and systems engaged with low-income, diverse Minnesotans to enlist them in assistance with making State Parks more accessible through systems and policy changes, such as administering day-pass check-out programs, providing transportation, or enabling access to State Parks through participation in

benefit programs;

Seeking sustainability measures, including funding and staffing, to ensure ongoing support for the programs and systems being implemented.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Completion Date
Convene statewide strategy team, adopt productive meeting structure to support and manage project goals	2021-12-31
Provide training and orientation to Conservation Corps members to support community systems changes	2023-02-28
Develop sustainability plan for ongoing implementation of accessibility programs and systems for low-income, diverse Minnesotans	2024-06-30
Develop recommendations for implementation of system/policy changes for accessibility of State Parks	2024-06-30
Implement support and advisory systems to ensure the cultural responsiveness of program offerings	2024-06-30

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Amy Michael	MN Department of Health	Provide support and guidance for Walk with Ease program	No
Deborah Meyer	MN Department of Natural Resources	Provide support and guidance for OWLS program via the R3 initiative	No
James Burnham	MN Department of Natural Resources	Provide support and guidance for OWLS program via the R3 initiative	No
Martha Reger	MN Department of Natural Resources	Provide local connections and guidance for collaborative SNAP-Ed/DNR programs	No
Paul Hansen	MN Department of Natural Resources	Provide local connections and guidance for collaborative SNAP-Ed/DNR programs	No
Arielle Courtney	MN Department of Natural Resources	Participate in statewide advisory team to support Park Rx integration and system and policy changes within Extension, DNR, and partner organizations	No

## Long-Term Implementation and Funding

**Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this be funded?**

The Statewide Strategy Team will serve as the sustainability measure within this project. Aims of the team will be to identify systems and policy changes to reduce barriers for low-income, diverse Minnesotans to accessing Minnesota's natural resources and outdoor recreation, with particular emphasis on Minnesota State Parks. This team will also monitor and analyze educational program implementation, outcome and impact data throughout the project to make recommendations and seek funding and staffing for continuation of the programs.

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Trina Adler

**Job Title:** Program Director

**Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.**

Trina Adler brings over 20 years of experience as a program manager, leader and director with University of Minnesota Extension supporting programs and projects designed for low-income, diverse Minnesotans. She has served as PI and Co-I on projects ranging from contracts with State agencies to Federal- and foundation-funded programs. Her role includes leading, overseeing and guiding programmatic elements to ensure high quality learning experiences and cultural relevance, appropriate assessment and evaluation for effectiveness and accountability, and smooth and supportive administrative and logistical processes.

Trina has extensive experience in convening teams and collaborative efforts for organizational and system changes, and

working with community stakeholders to improve accessibility of programs and services for people who are experiencing disparities.

Over the past 3 years Trina has supported several collaborative programs between the SNAP-Ed program, 4-H, and DNR to make Minnesota's natural resources available and accessible to low income immigrant, refugee, and BIPOC families, in recognition of the positive influence of nature-engagement on health and mental flourishing.

**Organization:** U of MN - Twin Cities

**Organization Description:**

University of Minnesota Extension discovers science-based solutions, delivers practical education, and engages Minnesotans to build a better future. Extension's Center for Family Development (CFD), through its nimbleness, innovation, and relevance, teaches families and those who serve families to make informed decisions leading to greater health, resilience and well-being. Extension's Center for Youth Development (CYD) strives to increase the quality, availability and impact of community learning opportunities for youth throughout Minnesota. As a result of our initiatives, Minnesota families — no matter their makeup, structure, or place in life — possess the knowledge and skills to create resilient, healthy, and secure futures.

CFD's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Education (SNAP-Ed) program works in multiple ways to improve healthy eating, active living, and well being through direct education, as well as policy, system and environmental initiatives to benefit low-income populations. SNAP-Ed utilizes the Spectrum of Prevention framework to support improvements in the living environment and individual behavior. SNAP-Ed embraces a co-creation approach in which the community is fully engaged in assessing, addressing, and sustaining change initiatives. SNAP-Ed works in partnership with local organizations and agencies to maximize resources and respectfully engage community members who are experiencing poverty and other disparities.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
Program Director		Guide project implementation, facilitate statewide Strategy Team			36.5%	0.3		\$35,151
Extension Educator		Oversee and guide OWLS program			36.5%	0.6		\$54,771
Coordinator		Logistical and technical support			36.5%	0.6		\$48,167
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$138,089</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	4 TBN individuals who will serve as advisors on the Statewide Strategy Team to provide the perspective of low-income, diverse Minnesotans with regard to the strategies identified and considered for implementation to reduce barriers and increase access to Parks and natural resources for this demographic				0.06		\$4,000
Conservation Corps Minnesota/Iowa	Professional or Technical Service Contract	10 TBN individuals who will each serve for one year to support the OWLS youth development cohorts in each of 5 regions and support the strategies of the statewide Strategy Team to improve accessibility of State Parks and natural resources by working with organizations to create accessibility systems and policies		X		10		\$264,375
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Up to 10 licensed child care providers to provide child care for children 5 and younger during family based classes to ensure safety and provide age-appropriate care and activities				0.12		\$13,500
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$281,875</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
	Tools and Supplies	Educational props, reinforcers, materials and tools for knowledge and skill development, items vary	Utilized by instructors and participants as part of educational					\$37,500



		depending upon course, average cost of \$75/participant	process for knowledge and skill development					
	Tools and Supplies	Food for SNAP-Ed educational participants, 90 sessions x 25 participants/session x \$5/participant	To demonstrate, practice, and taste-test food preparation techniques consummate with the outdoor skills and activities covered in the educational session	X				\$11,250
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$48,750</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Mileage for Extension staff involved in educational events classes and Strategy Team and related meetings, (90 educational sessions + 45 meetings) x 2 people x 100 miles x \$.575	Extension staff will provide educational content and logistical support for classes, retreats and events at State Parks and other sites throughout Minnesota to support the deliverables of the project					\$15,525
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$15,525</b>
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
	Printing	Printing of educational materials and handouts for family-based classes, 90 sessions @ 4.29 session	Materials will explain class content, show diagrams and graphics to illustrate key concepts, and provide take-home tools such as recipes and other information to continue the learning process					\$386

							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$386</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>								
		State Park parking permits for low income, diverse families involve in this project 225 passes x \$35	Low income, diverse families participating in this program will attend multiple classes at State Parks and will be supported in practicing skills learned from those classes at state parks. The fees required to park at state park can be prohibitive to families with limited financial resources; the permit will allow them to park at a State Park for a one year period without having to assume this expense.					\$7,875
		Retreat expenses (lodging, meals) for youth participants in 4 OWLS retreats (2 4-day retreats, 2 2-day retreats, x 125 youth)	Participants in the 5 youth OWLS cohorts will participate in 4 educational retreats during the 2-year program at which they will gain knowledge, skills and leadership capabilities as well as practice an environmental stewardship service-learning project. The youth involved in these retreats will be from low-income families without the means to cover these expenses.					\$57,500
		Transportation costs for participants in family-based class series; 90 sessions x \$200/session	Transportation often serves as a barrier for low-income families to visiting state parks because they are often not accessible via public transportation or other accessible means. The family based educational classes for this project will all take place at state parks and other natural locations around the state. To ensure the full participation by low-income families we will offer transportation options to reduce this potential barrier to attendance.					\$18,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$83,375</b>

							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$568,000</b>
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## Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
<b>Contracts and Services -</b> Conservation Corps Minnesota/Iowa	Professional or Technical Service Contract	10 TBN individuals who will each serve for one year to support the OWLS youth development cohorts in each of 5 regions and support the strategies of the statewide Strategy Team to improve accessibility of State Parks and natural resources by working with organizations to create accessibility systems and policies	The individuals in these positions are Conservation Corps service members within the Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa which is a part of the AmeriCorps national service program. The Conservation Corps recruits, screens and provides staff for outdoor/conservation related work, with ongoing training and support for skill development related to the work they are doing. There is no comparable organization qualified to provide staff in accordance with our requirements for candidates from diverse, low-income backgrounds, readied for the specific kinds of services needed for this project related to creating accessibility to Minnesota's natural resources. <b>This is a single source contract.</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>		Food for SNAP-Ed educational participants, 90 sessions x 25 participants/session x \$5/participant	Food is essential for the participants in this project, as they are focused on nutrition and culinary skills directly related to their outdoor experiences. In the classes proposed for this project whole families will be participating in the outdoors, exerting themselves physically for several-hour sessions. The families involved in the program have very low incomes, and expecting them to bring their own food for the program would constitute an undue burden. Finally, the families involved in the program will be from many immigrant and refugee populations wherein eating meals together is a cultural mainstay of relationship-building, and provides a platform for social engagement, trust-building, sharing, learning, and comfort. This was confirmed via focus group results with Latin@ participants, indicating that taking, making and sharing food contributed to the social aspect of visiting parks. Providing a meal will demonstrate cultural responsiveness and sharing a meal together will engender positive associations with the outdoor experiences.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	-
			<b>Funds Total</b>	-

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [0bc4e364-66d.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

- 1) The Opportunity: Results from 2016-17 focus groups of Latin@ households regarding State Park use, including challenges and obstacles (fear, lack of affordability, lack of transportation, lack of information), recognized benefits (family, seasons, community, tourism), and social characteristics (opportunities for youth, food as an integral aspect of recreation, cultural representation).
- 2) The Strategy: Project strategies using the spectrum of prevention framework, including Strengthening Knowledge and Skills through educational programs, promoting community education through Park Rx, Educating Providers as part of the Strategy Team outreach activities, Fostering Coalitions and Networks through the formation of the Strategy Team, Changing Organizational Practices and Influencing Policy and Legislation through Strategy Team recommendations for creating systems and policies to reduce barriers and increase accessibility to State Parks for low income, diverse Minnesotans
- 3) The Results: Photos of diverse Minnesotans enjoying State Park trails, facilities and events, along with practicing food skills.

### Optional Attachments

#### *Support Letter or Other*

Title	File
U of MN Sponsored Projects Cover Letter	<a href="#">3fdc1512-3b1.pdf</a>

## Administrative Use

**Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?**

No

**Does your project have patent, royalties, or revenue potential?**

No

**Does your project include research?**

No

**Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?**

No



# Engaging Diverse Low-income Residents with Minnesota’s Natural Resources

## THE OPPORTUNITY

Findings from 5 focus groups with 54 Latin@ participants from SE Minnesota 11/31/2016 to 2/11/2017:

### Challenges and Obstacles

**Fear:** Many Latinos are afraid of walking outside their home due to the current political climate.

**Affordability:** Latinos face financial challenges in accessing parks, particularly in paying for entrance permits.

**Transportation:** Getting to state parks is hard for many Latinos due to a lack of transportation options and public transit.

**Lack of Outreach:** Many Latino’s know where to find information, but there isn’t information in Spanish that is geared at them.

**Lack of Education:** There is a lack of education for children in schools about state parks. Parents also may not be aware about state parks because there isn’t outreach to them in public schools.

### Recognized Benefits

**Family:** Family time is one of the most important elements Latinos consider in going to state parks.

**Seasons:** Spring and summer are the best times to be outdoors.

**Community:** State parks are recognized as community building spaces where people gather to enjoy leisure and family time.

**Tourism:** While there are existing challenges in accessing state parks, Latinos recognize them as attractive tourist destinations to learn about nature, history, and other people.

### Social Characteristics

**Latino Youth:** Younger Latinos are more aware about the opportunities to go to state parks than their parents.

**Food:** Taking, making, and sharing food in parks is recognized as a positive value by Latino families.

**Inter-cultural activities:** Latinos are interested in representation of their culture, other POC and immigrant communities in state parks. This may include festivals, fairs showcasing cultural traditions.

Authors: Fernando Burga PhD (PI), Rodolfo Gutierrez, Jennifer Villalobos, Sara Parcero-Leites. Poster design by Jared Staley. Special Thanks to Xinyi Quian for her support on the early stages of this project and to Erin Meier, Director UM Extension SE Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships. This research project was possible through a grant of Extension’s Regional Sustainable Development Partnership.

## THE STRATEGY: Spectrum of Prevention Framework

Influencing Policy and Legislation	Provide day-use annual State Park passes to households receiving EBT benefits, WIC benefits, or other benefit programs
Changing Organizational Practices	Establish State Park day pass check-out systems with libraries, food shelves, schools, or other community agencies
Fostering Coalitions and Networks	Establish a statewide strategy team to recommend and facilitate systems and policy changes to reduce barriers to visiting State Parks for low income, diverse Minnesotans
Educating Providers	Hire and train Conservation Corps workers from diverse, low-income backgrounds to educate partners regarding ParkRx and the benefits of facilitating nature-engaged lifestyles
Promoting Community Education	Adapt and implement the Park Rx program in a culturally responsive manner
Strengthening Knowledge and Skills	“Walk with Ease”, “Hook and Cook”, “Hike and Cook”, “Camp and Cook”, and OWLS educational/experiential programs

## THE RESULT



