



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2021 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2021-370

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

Project Manager Information

Name: Luke Reese

Organization: City of Austin

Office Telephone: (507) 437-7519

Email: luke.reese@hormelnaturecenter.org

Project Basic Information

Project 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.

Funds Requested: \$275,000

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?

Region(s): SE

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

Region(s): SE

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project

Narrative

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

Since 1988, the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center has provided environmental education curricula to every Austin Public or private school student for the first eight years of their education, K – 7th grades. In 2017, the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center opened a new interpretive center that more than doubled our teaching and exhibit spaces. Though the new building greatly expanded teaching spaces, staffing remained the same. Following completion of the new Interpretive Center, demand for school, children’s and family programs has increased at the Hormel Nature Center. Schools that do not make early requests are turned away. 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.

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.

Hiring additional staff will allow the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center 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.

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?

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.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Expand Environmental Education Opportunities with Additional Educator & Intern

Activity Budget: \$275,000

Activity 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.

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.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
1. Schedule at least 80 additional school groups for the 2021-22 school year.	2022-06-30
2. Provide 15 more summer programs than were provided in the summer of 2021.	2022-08-31
3. Maintain 250+ school groups attending HNC programs for the 2022-23 school year.	2023-06-30
4. Provide at least 45 summer programs for the 2023 summer.	2023-08-31
6. Provide at least 15 summer programs for the 2023 summer.	2024-06-30
5. Maintain 250+ school groups attending HNC programs for the 2023-24 school year.	2024-06-30

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Gary Zimmerman	Friends of the Hormel Nature Center	President In the previous iteration of this application, the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center agreed to fund the ~10% not awarded by the LCCMR committee. They would likely maintain this commitment, if required, for this application.	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?

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, we would, with local and regional organizations' support, commit to permanently funding these positions.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Luke Reese

Job Title: Director / Naturalist

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

- 3.5 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:
 - o 3 full-time permanent
 - o 2 part-time permanent
 - o 2 full-time temporary
 - o 1 part-time temporary
 - o 15-20 mentees
 - o ~80 volunteers
- Receive and/or administer grants from:
 - o The Hormel Foundation
 - o MN DNR – Conservation Partners Legacy Grant
 - o Austin Area Foundation
 - o Freeborn-Mower Operation Round Up
 - o The Small Change Foundation
- Serve on or report to the following boards/committees:
 - o Austin Parks and Rec board
 - o Friends of the Hormel Nature Center
 - o Cedar River Watershed Citizens' Advisory Committee
 - o Spruce Up Austin Board
 - o 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

Organization: City of Austin

Organization Description:

Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Established: 1971

Land base: 529 acres Miles of trail: 10+

New Interpretive Center Opened April 2017

Designated regionally significant by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission in Oct. 2019

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.
- Have received three Conservation Partners Legacy grants from the DNR through the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
2nd Naturalist		Bring in school groups and hold programs for outside-of-Austin kids			34%	3		\$161,632
FY2022 Intern		Intern supporting the 2nd naturalist in growing Jay C. Hormel Nature Center education programming beyond Austin.			40%	1		\$37,635
FY2023 Intern		Intern supporting the 2nd naturalist in growing Jay C. Hormel Nature Center education programming beyond Austin.			40%	1		\$37,788
FY2024 Intern		Intern supporting the 2nd naturalist in growing Jay C. Hormel Nature Center education programming beyond Austin.			41%	1		\$37,945
							Sub Total	\$275,000
Contracts and Services								
							Sub Total	-
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-

Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$275,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
In-Kind	Volunteers	Volunteers assisting with school groups. 150 opportunities x 4 hours x \$13/hr x 3 years	Pending	\$23,400
Cash	Friends of the Hormel Nature Center	Mentorship program for 3 years	Pending	\$12,000
In-Kind	Volunteers	Special program volunteers. 245 opportunities for 667 hours x \$10/hr x 3 years	Pending	\$20,010
Cash	Schools attending programs	Program fees generated: 80 additional groups x 20 students/group x \$5/student	Potential	\$8,000
In-Kind	Schools	Bussing 80 additional groups x \$100/bus	Potential	\$8,000
In-Kind	City of Austin	Grant administration and supervision (10% of director's time) x 3 years	Secured	\$26,150
In-Kind	City of Austin	Supplies July 2021 - June 2024	Pending	\$7,500
Cash	Friends of the Hormel Nature Center	Inservices x 3 years	Pending	\$3,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$108,060
			Funds Total	\$108,060

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [e8670d0b-689.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Text:

Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Supplemental Teaching Staff

Established in 1971

Owned and operated by the City of Austin

GMRPTC Regionally Significant Park

529-acres of land

New \$6.8 million Interpretive Center completed in 2017

-Taught 194 classes to 5,330 SE MN students in 2019

-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 programming.

-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.

Three pictures:

1. An intern teaching 4th graders how to tap a maple tree.

2. First graders showing off what they found living in the soil or under a log.

3. A volunteer holds out a baby turtle to middle school students. It was found while scooping the pond for aquatic invertebrates.

Map:

Shows 10 and 25-mile radius circles around the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center showing the lack of other Environmental Education opportunities nearby.

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
City of Austin Council Resolution	f73e4cfa-a8d.pdf

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

Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Supplemental Teaching Staff



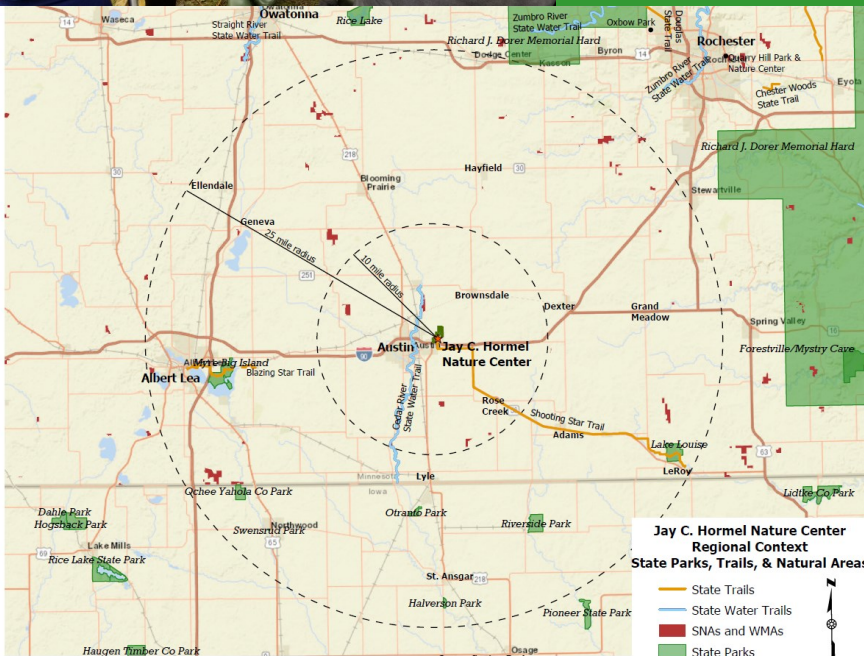
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