



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2022 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2022-029

Proposal Title: Increasing K-12 Student Learning to Achieve ENRTF's Goals

Project Manager Information

Name: Bryan Wood

Organization: Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center

Office Telephone: (320) 245-2648

Email: wood@ospreywilds.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Minnesota's six accredited residential environmental learning centers (RELCs) will provide life-changing, immersive multi-day environmental learning experiences to a minimum statewide distribution of 25,000 K-12 students, achieving ENRTF's goals.

Funds Requested: \$1,800,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30 2025

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

Narrative

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

Children today are increasingly deprived of time in nature (less than 30 minutes daily), resulting in a lack of awareness, understanding and contact with the environment. For students low on the socio-economic spectrum, this is compounded as there are typically no outdoor areas near where they live. Thirty-eight percent (over 323,000 children) of Minnesota's K-12 students qualify for free and reduced-price (FRP) meals, meaning a multi-day field trip is not financially feasible for tens of thousands of families. By offering scholarships for K-12 students who need support, we will provide meaningful hands-on nature experiences to children. Through our programs, the six renowned residential environmental learning centers of Minnesota (Deep Portage Learning Center, Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center, Laurentian Environmental Center, Long Lake Conservation Center, Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center, Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center) will provide more than 25,000 MN K-12 students with total immersion multi-day outdoor learning experiences. Minnesota's RELCs are uniquely positioned to make an incomparable impact on thousands of children through our accredited campuses across Minnesota. Every student experience will include multiple courses that are directly focused upon the learning outcomes of the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund's (ENRTF) constitutionally declared goals and objectives.

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.

We will provide scholarship assistance for student tuition fees as needed, with each K-12 student spending a minimum of three days (48 hours) at an RELC, including a minimum of 15 instruction hours. We will reach a statewide population of K-12 students and schools geographically and demographically, with eligible schools showing a clear financial need through our scholarship application process including determination via percentages of free and reduced-price (FRP) lunch program students. There is an urgent demand for financial support for these learning experiences, with COVID-19 only increasing this need. Without scholarship support, Minnesota will not reach its ENRTF goals with our younger citizens. These funds will supplement, not substitute school funding for trips to Minnesota's RELCs. The RELCs as accredited schools provide evidence-based, hands-on outdoor programs that increase the number of children recreating and learning outdoors. Due to the nature of these multi-day intense learning experiences where the level of engagement is very high, student learning is such that it creates lifelong memories, which are the basis for developing the outdoor ethic Minnesotans are famous for. Minnesota's RELCs' reach for this remarkably expansive project is unmatched. All RELC staff are subject to and have passed criminal background checks.

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?

Provide a minimum of 25,000 K-12 Minnesota students multi-day learning experiences at Minnesota's RELCs, totaling a minimum of 375,000 instruction hours and 1.2 million hours onsite.

By giving K-12 students extended time in nature, we help Minnesota achieve ENRTF's goals and help students develop environmental awareness, appreciation and interest, crafting a future where environmental protection, conservation and stewardship are recognized, valued and implemented.

Through financial support to underserved student populations, we address social, economic, and physical barriers to outdoor recreation.

More individuals will go into environmental careers, like the former K-12 student-participants now employed at RELCs.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Increasing K-12 Student Residential Environmental Learning Experiences

Activity Budget: \$1,800,000

Activity Description:

Provide scholarship funds for student tuition fees for visits to Minnesota’s RELCs on a needs-basis through scholarship application review for multi-day residential environmental learning experiences at one of Minnesota's six accredited residential environmental learning centers to a minimum of 25,000 Minnesota K-12 students. This Activity Budget is scalable.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Begin Contacting Prospective Schools & Awarding Scholarships	July 31 2022
Complete Year One of Providing K-12 Residential Environmental Learning Experiences	June 30 2023
Complete Year Two of Providing K-12 Residential Environmental Learning Experiences	June 30 2024
Complete Year Three of Providing K-12 Residential Environmental Learning Experiences	June 30 2025

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Dale Yerger	Deep Portage Learning Center	Executive Director	Yes
Colleen Fohrenbacher	Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center	Executive Director	Yes
Karl Brown	Laurentian Environmental Center	Director of Community Education, Mounds View Public Schools	Yes
David McMillan	Long Lake Conservation Center	Manager	Yes
Bryan Wood	Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center	Executive Director	Yes
Peter Smerud	Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center	Executive Director	Yes

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 RELCs establish relationships with the attending schools helping them plan and schedule their experiences, and regularly providing them with fundraising support. The provided scholarships will not be for 100% of the experience, rather the respective RELC will work with each school to help them build a diverse fundraising strategy that creates long term stability. As each RELC works with dozens of different schools, lessons learned will be shared for community-based fundraising ideas to create fundraising campaigns that achieve 100% of their need. RELCS are economic drivers in their communities, collectively employing over 200 individuals annually across our six sites.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Increasing Residential Environmental Learning Center Opportunities	M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 05g	\$130,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Bryan Wood

Job Title: Executive Director

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

Bryan Wood has served as Executive Director for Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center (formerly Audubon

Center of the North Woods) since 2009. During that time, Bryan has managed over \$2 million in grant projects including a \$1,500,000 National Energy & Technology Laboratory (NETL) grant in 2010 among Minnesota residential environmental learning centers for energy improvements and demonstrations, and a \$130,000 ENRTF grant in 2017 for K-12 residential environmental learning opportunities at Osprey Wilds.

Organization: Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center

Organization Description:

Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center (formerly Audubon Center of the North Woods) is a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located on 783 acres near Sandstone in Pine County, MN whose mission is "to instill a connection and commitment to the environment in people of all communities through experiential learning". Since 1969, this has been accomplished with a wide variety of environmental learning programs for audiences K-12 to seniors. Each year more than 4,000 K-12 students attend Osprey Wilds for residential environmental learning experiences, participating in outdoor learning on our 783-acre campus.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
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								

		K-12 Participant Tuition Scholarships	Funding Support for K-12 students to attend Minnesota's RELCs					\$1,800,000
							Sub Total	\$1,800,000
							Grand Total	\$1,800,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
---------------	---------------------	-------------	--

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center	K-12 Scholarship Support	Secured	\$180,000
Cash	Deep Portage Learning Center	K-12 Scholarship Support	Secured	\$120,000
Cash	Aitkin County	Long Lake Conservation Center Support	Secured	\$75,000
Cash	Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center	K-12 Scholarship Support	Secured	\$60,000
Cash	Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center	K-12 Scholarship Support	Secured	\$60,000
Cash	Long Lake Conservation Center Foundation	K-12 Scholarship Support	Secured	\$15,000
Cash	Ecolab Foundation	K-12 Scholarship Support for St. Paul Schools	Potential	\$30,000
Cash	Mayo Clinic Community Contribution Foundation	K-12 Scholarship Support for Olmsted County Schools	Potential	\$15,000
Cash	Onan Family Foundation	K-12 Scholarship Support for Minneapolis & St. Paul Schools	Potential	\$8,000
Cash	St. Paul Audubon Society	K-12 Scholarship Support for St. Paul Schools	Potential	\$4,000
Cash	Minneapolis Audubon Society	K-12 Scholarship Support for Minneapolis Schools	Potential	\$3,000
Cash	Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis	K-12 Scholarship Support for Minneapolis Schools	Potential	\$3,000
Cash	Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter	K-12 Scholarship Support for South Metro Schools	Potential	\$3,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$576,000
			Funds Total	\$576,000

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [06892960-f53.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

This map shows the vast reach and impact that Minnesota's residential environmental learning centers currently have with Minnesota's K-12 schools....

Financial Capacity

File: [a6c10e6c-69b.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Osprey Wilds Board Minutes 02.25 - LCCMR Board Resolution on Page 3 Highlighted in Yellow	9dc64734-ace.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
MN Department of Education Letter of Support	48cd0f7e-326.pdf
Senator Rarick Letter of Support	164dc1f6-f0a.pdf
Representative Davids Letter of Support	ac49a35a-02e.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

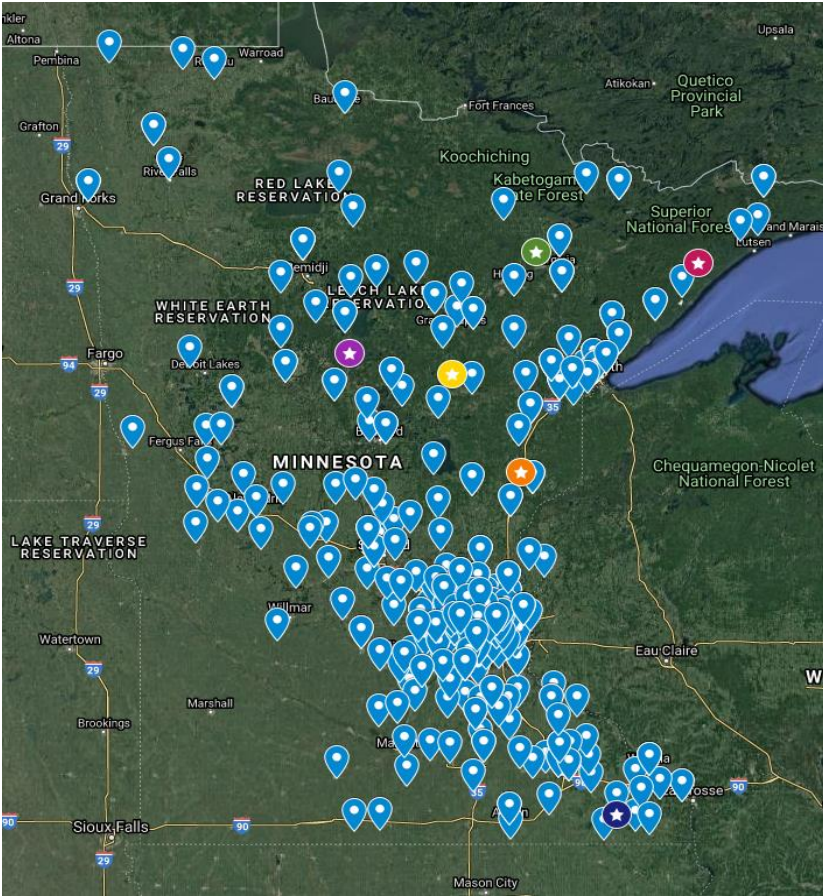
Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Minnesota RELC Attending Schools



200 Communities Served
600 Schools Served
38,000 Participants Served

- ★ Wolf Ridge ELC
- ★ Laurentian LC
- ★ Osprey Wilds ELC
- ★ Eagle Bluff ELC
- ★ Deep Portage LC
- ★ Long Lake Conservation

Metro RELC Attending Schools

