



## Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

### 2023 Request for Proposal

#### General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2023-008

**Proposal Title:** Fostering Conservation by Connecting Students to the BWCA

#### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Alison Nyenhuis

**Organization:** Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

**Office Telephone:** (612) 263-0347

**Email:** alison@friends-bwca.org

#### Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** Friends of the Boundary Water Wilderness will connect over 10,000 Minnesota youth to the Boundary Waters through state standards-aligned environmental education, experiential learning, and multi-day wilderness canoe trips.

**Funds Requested:** \$1,148,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** June 30, 2026

**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.**

While Minnesota is home to Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, many youth are unaware of what the Boundary Waters is or are unable to visit the area. Reasons are complex, but barriers range from factors such as the financial means, lack of trusted adults able and willing to lead a trip, lack of skill, fear of the wilderness, among others which prevent young people from exploring this natural gem.

Additionally, recent research shows that younger populations are spending less time in nature. Common Sense Media found “that teenagers (ages 13-18) use an average of nine hours of entertainment media per day and that tweens (ages 8-12) use an average of six hours a day, not including time spent using media for school or homework.” Again, the reasons are complex for the increased screen time and include some of the previously named.

Our No Boundaries program aims to change these factors and the nature deficit experienced by youth by fostering curiosity and engaging youth of all backgrounds in nature throughout all geographic regions of Minnesota while building leadership skills, confidence, and resilience.

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

We engage diverse and/or underserved students, grades 6 - 12, throughout Minnesota to foster curiosity, resilience, and other skills by connecting them with nature and the BWCA. We introduce students to the BWCA through partnerships with schools and youth organizations to:

- present environmental education centered on this wilderness gem,
- foster character-building skills,
- offer BWCA trip experiences.

We’ve successfully carried out programming throughout the state and we propose to continue this work - expanding our reach while strengthening current relationships. To do this while maintaining a community focus which fosters deep relationships with organizations and schools, we will hire regional coordinators. These staff will connect directly with schools and organizations in the area, provide programming, and host local events with students and their families which build on a connection to the BWCA.

Students will benefit from events and trips which foster character development and skill building in a safe environment. They will discover an emotional connection as they enjoy time in nature, and reap the documented benefits. The repeat experiences we will offer will create opportunities for personal connections to the wilderness, making individuals more likely to engage in future conservation, protection, and preservation.

**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?**

- Connecting at least 10,000 Minnesota students, grades 6-12, to standards-aligned environmental education focused on the BWCA, providing the foundation for connection to our wild spaces and places which, in turn, leads to further conservation.
- Fostering connections between diverse and underserved students and nature through repeat experiences and skill building exercises to motivate long-term relationships. At least 300 students will participate in BWCA Paddle Days and/or Wilderness Trips.
- Cultivating leadership qualities in at least 23 students while developing deeper connectedness to the BWCA through extension activities to develop and stimulate future generations of environmental stewards.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Building Boundary Waters Awareness

**Activity Budget:** \$354,350

**Activity Description:**

Since the beginning of our program, we've brought BWCA-focused education to thousands of students statewide via virtual and in-person lessons and events. As we approach a new phase, we will continue this work while expanding our reach and strengthening relationships.

We will build awareness of the BWCA through resources and events for teachers and students, and in some cases, students' families. These large-reaching activities build a foundation for future engagement:

- On-site environmental education
- Teacher network
- Virtual classroom resources which start at the computer and end outdoors
- BWCA Paddle Days (Started as a COVID-related adaptation, these have proven to be an excellent way to build relationships with schools and families, while also allowing schools to foster community connectedness.)

To carry these out, we will add area-specific coordinators to build relationships, implement local programming, and raise BWCA awareness. Events and programming will be community-informed based on unique assets, needs, feedback, or barriers.

Although we currently have state-wide relationships, with additional staffing, equipment to bring paddling experiences to more rural areas, and resources to translate our materials into other languages, we can build partnerships with schools and communities more effectively. This, in turn, increases buy-in for lasting opportunities such as future wilderness

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Completion Date
Materials translated into other languages besides English	March 31, 2024
400 No Boundaries Educator Network teachers, 2500 virtual or in-person experiences provided, 4 paddle days	August 31, 2024
650 No Boundaries Educator Network teachers, 3500 virtual or in-person experiences provided, 5 paddle days	August 31, 2025
700 No Boundaries Educator Network teachers, 4500 virtual or in-person experiences provided, 7 paddle days	June 30, 2026

### Activity 2: BWCA Trip Experiences

**Activity Budget:** \$491,000

**Activity Description:**

For many years, the Friends has provided scholarships to students for multi-day canoe trips in the Boundary Waters Wilderness. But there are barriers besides money that prevent diverse and underserved students from exploring public lands, specifically the Boundary Waters.

We seek to strengthen our support to more accurately identify and address barriers impacting students throughout the state. To do this, we will hire regional coordinators to work with partner schools and youth-serving community groups. Coordinators will serve as local liaisons to increase breadth and depth of relationships with communities and students so that they can fully understand the needs, desires, and assets of communities, as it relates to the BWCA.

We know that for students to participate in a wilderness trip, they must first feel safe and confident. To foster this, we hold skill-building days before wilderness trips. These will serve as a community-informed strategy to address safety concerns while building confidence through low-risk activities in student's own communities. From these events, students learn what to expect on a BWCA trip and can gain the skills and confidence needed to be more prepared and have a positive experience. This not only strengthens connections with students but provides program feedback.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Completion Date
10 partner schools/organizations, 75 student trip participants, 10 pre-trip program sessions	August 31, 2024
13 partner schools/organizations, 100 student trip participants, 13 pre-trip program sessions	August 31, 2025
15 partner schools/organizations, 125 student trip participants, 15 pre-trip program sessions.	June 30, 2026

### Activity 3: Fostering Leadership and Conservation through Repeat Wilderness Experiences

**Activity Budget:** \$302,650

**Activity Description:**

Starting in year two of the grant term, we propose to expand programming to include a component for student leadership. We will offer opportunities for students who have participated in past trips and programming to engage further for a deeper connection to the Boundary Waters. Led by regional coordinators, we will offer bimonthly connections and experiences including, but not limited to local outdoor exploration, winter BWCA trips, teambuilding, and service to local communities. As a student leader, students will help lead paddle days and summer wilderness trips with their local school/community group.

We will assess program development and success through student and instructor surveys. Surveys for students will include components such as growth in skill development, confidence, stewardship, and interest in further learning in topics related to environmental conservation or wilderness exploration. These will help guide future program development and modifications.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Completion Date
At least 8 students experience BWCA in winter, bi-monthly local nature experiences, overnight leadership trip.	August 31, 2025
At least 15 students experience BWCA in winter, bi-monthly local nature experiences, overnight leadership trip.	June 30, 2026



## 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 work be funded?**

Results from this project, including student engagement in our program, relationships with schools and community organizations, and feedback from participants from all backgrounds will inform and support the broader implementation of our No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters programming for years to come, resulting in future engagement and stewardship in Minnesota's public lands, specifically the Boundary Waters

We will fund complementary and ongoing work beyond this project through sources such as, but not limited to individual donors, corporate and foundation grants, and/or event income.

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Connecting Students to the Boundary Waters	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 05b	\$450,000

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Alison Nyenhuis

**Job Title:** Education Director

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

Alison Nyenhuis, Education Director, has been with the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness since 2019. She oversees the No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters program that is funded in part by our 2019 LCCMR appropriation "Connecting Students to the Boundary Waters". Under her direction, our current project has met or exceeded goals and metrics laid out in the application in spite of COVID-related setbacks and modifications.

As a former classroom teacher, youth wilderness guide, and environmental educator, she has a wealth of experience in outdoor education, project management, and inspiring young learners of all backgrounds. She is skilled in curriculum development, and organizing and administering large-scale projects. While overseeing our current LCCMR-funded project, she has demonstrated that she also has the skills and creativity to adapt to unforeseen circumstances.

**Organization:** Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

**Organization Description:**

Since 1976, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness has been the leading voice for the ongoing protection, preservation, and restoration of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCA). Our organization was instrumental in the passage of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act of 1978, which made the Boundary Waters what it is today.

The mission of the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness is to protect, preserve and restore the wilderness character of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Quetico-Superior ecosystem. We believe that in order to protect, preserve and restore the wilderness, increased access is necessary. Our future generations of land stewards are the youth of today.

We envision a future where all people feel welcome in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and help to

maintain the natural recreational resources of the space. A future where threats to that wilderness no longer exist, and where communities surrounding the BWCA are prosperous and thriving. These drive our day-to-day work and we foresee the greatest impact to come through our No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters program.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
Education Director (.5 FTE) = 41,000 X 25% Benefits X 3 years = 153,750		Project Manager			25%	1.5		\$153,750
Education Coordinator (Twin Cities) Salary (\$50,000) + 25% Benefits (\$12,500) = \$62,500/FTE x 3 years, plus a 5% pay raise years 2 and 3 = \$192,625		Coordinates and carries out project activities in/around Twin Cities Metro & portions of Greater Minnesota			25%	3		\$192,625
Education Coordinator (Twin Cities) Salary (\$50,000) + 25% Benefits (\$12,500) = \$62,500/FTE x 3 years, plus a 5% pay raise years 2 and 3 = \$192,625		Coordinates and carries out project activities in/around Twin Cities Metro & portions of Greater Minnesota			25%	3		\$192,625
Education Coordinator (Greater MN) Salary (\$50,000) + 25% Benefits (\$12,500) = \$62,500/FTE x 2 years, plus a 5% pay raise years 2 and 3 = \$127,500		Coordinates and carries out project activities in Greater Minnesota location 1			25%	2		\$127,500

- location 1) Salary (\$50,000) + 25% Benefits (\$12,500) = \$62,500/FTE x 2 years = 125,000, plus a 5% pay raise in year 2 = 127,500								
Education Coordinator (Greater MN - location 2) Salary (\$50,000) + 25% Benefits (\$12,500) = \$62,500/FTE x 1 year = 62,500		Coordinates and carries out project activities in Greater Minnesota location 2			25%	1		\$62,500
Education Interns (Twin Cities) - 2 per year		Carry out project activities. \$17/hour, 20 hours a week, 25 weeks. =\$8,500X2 = 17,000 x 3 years = \$51,000			0%	0.72		\$51,000
Education Intern (Greater MN - location 1 )		Carry out project activities in Greater MN - 1 per year, \$17/hour, 20 hours a week, 25 weeks. =\$8,500X2 years = 17,000			0%	0.48		\$17,000
Education Intern (Greater MN - location 2 )		Carry out project activities in Greater MN area not covered by other Intern - 1 per year, \$17/hour, 20 hours a week, 25 weeks. =\$8,500X1 year = 8,500			0%	0.24		\$8,500
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$805,500</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Translation services (\$800/year) = \$2400				0		\$2,400

TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Guest Speaker honorariums (\$100 / speaker, 4 speakers a year for 3 years)			0		\$1,200
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Online curriculum GIS work and video editing			0.24		\$3,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Digital design work: brochures for No Boundaries Teacher Network or No Boundaries programming (3 projects per year, \$300 per project x 3 years)			0.24		\$3,000
						<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$9,600</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>							
	Tools and Supplies	Curriculum kit supplies	Curriculum kit supplies - one additional set for Twin Cities (Materials for course like map and compass, skull investigation, biomes, ecosystems, campsite skills, Leave No Trace). Each set of supplies costs \$2,000.				\$2,000
	Tools and Supplies	Curriculum kit supplies	Curriculum kit supplies - one set for Greater MN, first location (Materials for course like map and compass, skull investigation, biomes, ecosystems, campsite skills, Leave No Trace). Each set of supplies costs \$2,000.				\$2,000
	Tools and Supplies	Curriculum kit supplies	Curriculum kit supplies - one set for Greater MN, second location (Materials for course like map and compass, skull investigation, biomes, ecosystems, campsite skills, Leave No Trace). Each set of supplies costs \$2,000.				\$2,000
	Equipment	Kevlar canoe	Kevlar canoe for portage courses at schools, 1 canoe for Greater Minnesota location #2				\$3,000
	Equipment	Kevlar canoe	Kevlar canoe for portage courses at schools. 1 canoe for Twin Cities location				\$3,000

	Equipment	Paddles for paddling programs	Paddles for paddling programs (1 set for twin cities location, 1 set for Greater MN) (\$50/paddle, 30 paddles)					\$1,500
	Equipment	Personal Flotation Devices	PFDS for paddling programs (1 set for twin cities location, 1 set for Greater MN) (\$50/pfd, 40 pfds)					\$2,000
	Equipment	4 non-kevlar canoes	4 non-kevlar canoes for paddle demonstration \$1,200 each X4 = 4,800					\$4,800
	Equipment	Canoe trailer	Trailer to transport canoes					\$4,000
	Tools and Supplies	Online platform subscription	Online platform subscription for teacher online resources (\$350 / year)					\$1,050
	Equipment	Program Cameras (1 per location) \$800 each	To provide photo documentation to include in brochures, report materials, articles, etc.	X				\$2,400
	Equipment	Kevlar Canoe	Kevlar canoe for portage courses at schools. 1 canoe for Greater Minnesota location #1					\$3,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$30,750</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Mileage, food and lodging for staff visits to schools. 175 average food and lodging, 10 times per year per coordinator. Year 1: 175 x20 =3500. Year 2: 175X30 = 5,250 Year 3: 7,000 20 visits per coordinator per year at an average of 78 miles per visit. 180 visits X 78 miles X .585 per mile = 8,250 . \$8250 + \$15,750 = 24,000	Mileage, food and lodging for Coordinators to visit schools throughout the state.					\$24,000
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Transportation for leadership program: Rental passenger van (\$250/ day, 4 days a year per cohort) Year 1 - \$1000, Year 2 \$2000	Staff will carry out leadership program activities/outings & will rent a passenger van to transport students.					\$3,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$27,000</b>

<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
	Printing	Brochures for School Programming (\$2.50 per brochure X 200 = 500 X 3 years = 1,500	Brochures to give to schools/teachers/youth organizations with information about our programming					\$1,500
	Printing	Trip journals for students on Boundary Waters canoe trips (\$3.83/student on trips = 100 X 3.83 X 3 years)	Trip journals for students to use on their BWCAW trips					\$1,150
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$2,650</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>								
		BWCA "local" day trip experiences	BWCA "local" day trip experiences: paddling, portaging, and other BWCA skills and activities in areas near the organization for student and/or household groups. (17 events per year X \$1000 per event).					\$17,000
		Wilderness canoe trip scholarship / trip fees	Scholarships / trip fees for student groups to experience multiday trips in the boundary Waters with an average trip price of \$800 / person. 250x800 = 200,000 (remaining 50 individual trip fees in match)					\$200,000
		Wilderness canoe trips for students in leadership program	Trip fees for leadership program: \$1500 per student for overnight BWCA trip, local leadership overnight, BWCA winter retreat, and local programming. 23 students x \$1500 = \$34,500					\$34,500
		Chaperone stipend - wilderness canoe trips	Teacher stipend for chaperoning trip \$500 per teacher per trip group. \$500 X 42 trips (300 students / group size of 7)= \$21,000					\$21,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$272,500</b>

							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,148,000</b>
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------------------------	--------------------



Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		Program Cameras (1 per location) \$800 each	Cameras would allow staff to document project activities for inclusion in any brochures to teachers/youth organizations, reporting materials, news articles, etc.

## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
In-Kind	Individual donations and foundation grants to support the multi-day Boundary Waters canoe wilderness trips.	scholarships for multi-day Boundary Waters canoe wilderness trips	Secured	\$60,000
In-Kind	Individual donations and foundation grants which support general operations	Additional staff support from the Executive Director, Operations Director, Community Coordinator, and Grants Manager (\$8,000/year x 3 years = \$24,000; .15 FTE)	Secured	\$24,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$84,000</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$84,000</b>

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [3b2202d4-6fc.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

1-page document with short project description and photos...

#### *Financial Capacity*

File: [75d58b6d-8db.pdf](#)

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
Signed Board Resolution_Friends of BW	<a href="#">edb6bfb2-149.pdf</a>

### Optional Attachments

#### *Support Letter or Other*

Title	File
Letter of Support_CLUES-YA	<a href="#">51dbdf85-a95.pdf</a>
Project Success_Letter of Support	<a href="#">8065a075-23a.pdf</a>
Barnum Public Schools_Letter of Support	<a href="#">a466e098-24d.pdf</a>
Prairie Seeds Academy Letter of Support	<a href="#">47488c36-46c.pdf</a>

## 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

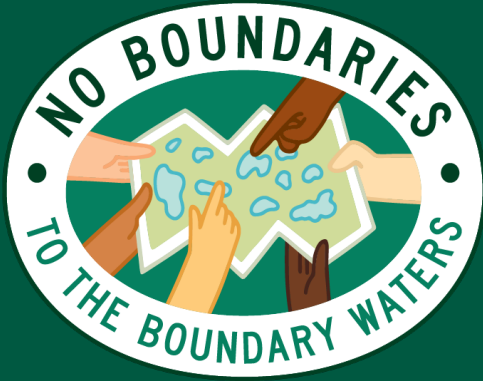
**Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?**

No

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

No





# Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness will connect over 10,000 Minnesota youth to the Boundary Waters



## Standards-aligned environmental education:

Providing Minnesota students the foundation for connection to our wild spaces and places which, in turn, leads to protection



## Wilderness trips:

Fostering connections between students and nature through repeat experiences to motivate long-term relationships and greater access to the Boundary Waters.



## Leadership Program

Developing deeper connectedness to the BWCA through extension opportunities, which stimulate future protection and conservation

