



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2027-585

Proposal Title: Mobile Classroom for Outdoor Recreation

Project Manager Information

Name: Jason McGrew-King

Organization: Three Rivers Park District

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Email: Jason.McGrew-King@ThreeRiversParks.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: The Outdoor Recreation School teaches recreation skills at outdoor locations. A mobile classroom will provide indoor teaching space during inclement weather and expand programming to locations without available indoor spaces.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$250,000

Proposed Project Completion: May 31, 2028

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (G)

Secondary Category: Education and Outdoor Recreation (C)

Project Location

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

Region(s): Metro

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

Region(s): Metro

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.

The Outdoor Recreation School, a mobile education team for Three Rivers Park District, focuses on teaching outdoor recreation skills like paddling, cross-country skiing, fishing, camping, archery, etc. These lessons take place where it is best to learn: outside, at lakes, trails, forests and prairies throughout the Park District's 27,000 acres. Research shows that learning outdoors increases curiosity and environmental stewardship (National Institute of Health) and reduces stress and anxiety among students (University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point).

With a warming climate, weather patterns in Minnesota have become more unstable and extreme. According to the National Weather Service, the state is experiencing its wettest period in over 125 years. There has been a 20% increase in 1-inch rainfalls and a 65% increase in 3-inch rainfalls. With the warmer and more humid climate, more frequent severe thunderstorms and heatwaves are expected. Additionally, it is becoming more difficult to accurately predict these significant weather events.

Due to the increase in extreme weather events, the Outdoor Recreation School has had to cancel an increasing number of programs. Over the past 4 years (2022- 2025), they have cancelled 202 programs due to extreme weather events, impacting 4,893 participants.

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.

Committed to our mission of promoting environmental stewardship through outdoor education and recreation, Three Rivers' programming staff develop high-quality programs that help people connect to and appreciate Minnesota's natural resources.

As we seek to develop a more climate-resilient model for offering programs, the availability of indoor teaching space and shelter from weather events is becoming increasingly important. Building permanent structures at every possible teaching location is cost-prohibitive, so a more affordable solution is needed.

A mobile classroom, a customized pull-behind trailer, will meet the need and will expand the locations where the Outdoor Recreation School can offer programs, both in our parks and in the communities we serve. The trailer will keep program participants safe, dry and warm and will allow the teaching to continue despite the inclement weather outside.

This classroom on wheels will reduce the number of programs cancelled due to forecasted weather and will expand program offerings to locations due to limited shelter amenities. While overcoming the issues presented by inclement weather, the mobile classroom will also provide opportunities to increase capacity and teach more people life-long outdoor recreation skills that they can put to use in Three Rivers parks and beyond into Minnesota's vast natural areas.

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?

Having a mobile indoor space will allow us to offer outdoor programs despite inclement weather conditions. Our program groups can take refuge, continuing the curriculum indoors while the storm passes. The mobile classroom can also give students a break from high or low temperatures. By adapting to the conditions, we teach resiliency in nature, help our participants continue to learn the subject matter and enhance their experience with natural resources. It is our goal that participants who have positive introductory experiences in nature will appreciate, be inspired and prepared to recreate in the beautiful natural resources across Minnesota.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Classroom Customization

Activity Budget: \$250,000

Activity Description:

With decades of program experience and evaluations from previous program participants, our staff is knowledgeable on how to best set up the classroom to maximize space and equipment. We have worked with local companies on outfitting other equipment trailers and will take a similar approach with this classroom setting.

The top milestone will be to co-create the mobile classroom with the Outdoor Recreation School instructors, the Fleet staff from Three Rivers, and the fabrication company.

Needs Assessment: This process will be collaborative, ensuring that the mobile classroom will meet the needs of the students, instructors and fleet staff while satisfying all Minnesota Department of Transportation requirements for road vehicles.

Fabrication/Customization: Three Rivers Park District will partner with a third-party vendor to design and deliver a mobile classroom that will meet our needs. We are striving to use light-weight materials to keep the vehicle under 10,000 pounds, avoiding the need for drivers to have a Commercial Driver's License. In the fabrication of the mobile classroom, we will also have the trailer wrapped with Three Rivers Park District branding, images of the Outdoor Recreation School, and the trust fund logo to acknowledge ENRTF support.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Needs Assessment	August 31, 2027
Fabrication/Customization	December 31, 2027

Dissemination

Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.

The mobile classroom itself will display the ENRTF logo, acknowledging support from the trust fund and ensuring that all future participants know the lasting impact of this support.

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?

Three Rivers Park District has a vehicle (\$80K in value) that will allow us to tow this mobile classroom. We also have a Fleet Department that will support and maintain this mobile classroom.

The mobile classroom will be incorporated into our existing Outdoor Recreation School operation. This work group currently operates 11 different equipment trailers. They have annual training in safe vehicle towing, as it is a normal part of their operation.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Shoreline Stabilization, Fishing, and ADA Improvements at Silverwood Park	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 08o	\$200,000
Karner Blue Butterfly Insurance Population Establishment in Minnesota	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08b	\$405,000
Mississippi Gateway Shoreline Stabilization and Fishing Improvements	M.L. 2025, First Special Session, Chp. 1, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08g	\$735,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Jason McGrew-King

Job Title: Intergovernmental Relations and Communications Supervisor

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

Jason McGrew-King is Intergovernmental Relations and Communications Supervisor for Three Rivers Park District and has 15 years of experience working with the Minnesota Legislature and all levels of government on behalf of Three Rivers Park District. His work includes writing, submitting and managing federal and state grant requests, including Congressional Community Project Funding requests and Capital Improvement requests submitted to Minnesota Management and Budget. Jason will manage this project throughout the LCCMR's consideration of it; if the Legislature appropriates funding for this project, the project manager role will shift to Wendy Weirich, Three Rivers Park District's Director of Outdoor Education and Recreation.

Wendy Weirich holds a Bachelor of Science in Parks and Recreation Administration and a Master's in Education, which provides a strong foundation for her to create, manage and deliver outdoor education projects. Additionally, she has 30 years of experience as a Parks and Recreation employee with extensive experience as an outdoor educator and manager. Prior to her role at Three Rivers Park District, Wendy spent 27 years with a large natural resource-based park

district in northern Ohio. As the Director of Outdoor Education and Recreation at Three Rivers Park District, she effectively manages a department of 120 year-round staff, frequently interfacing with the teams that would be implementing this proposed project. Given her strong relationships within her department, she will be able to garner their perspective and needs, set clear expectations for implementation and evaluate the project's effectiveness. Given her extensive experience, Wendy has the administrative, financial, and technical skillset to manage this proposed project.

Organization: Three Rivers Park District

Organization Description:

Three Rivers Park District is a natural resources-based park system in suburban Hennepin County. We were founded in 1957 by the Minnesota Legislature to acquire, develop and maintain regional parks, park reserves and trails. We manage 27,000 acres of parkland and over 176 miles of regional trails. Our passionate staff of more than 2,500 employees (full-time, part-time and seasonal) work together to carry out our mission to promote environmental stewardship through recreation and education in a natural resources-based park system. The name "Three Rivers" comes from our parks' geography, situated within the watersheds that flow into three significant rivers to this region: the Mississippi, the Minnesota and the Crow. Three Rivers' goal is to enhance the quality of life, local and statewide, through recreation and education while acquiring, developing and maintaining nature spaces for today and tomorrow.

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 Equipment								
		1 mobile classroom (customized pull-behind trailer)	The mobile classroom will expand the locations where Three Rivers Park District's Outdoor Recreation School can offer programs, both in our parks and in the communities we serve. The trailer will keep program participants safe, dry and warm and will allow the teaching to continue despite the inclement weather outside. This classroom on wheels will reduce the number of programs cancelled due to forecasted weather and will expand program offerings to locations due to limited shelter amenities. While overcoming the issues presented by inclement weather, the mobile classroom will also provide opportunities to increase capacity and teach more people life-long outdoor recreation skills that they can put to use in Three Rivers parks and beyond into Minnesota's vast natural areas.	X				\$250,000

							Sub Total	\$250,000
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	\$250,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Capital Equipment		1 mobile classroom (customized pull-behind trailer)	We do not anticipate ineligible expenses with this project. Additional Explanation : For the trailer's entire operating life, it will be used in Three Rivers Park District's Outdoor Recreation School programming to keep program participants safe, dry and warm. It will allow outdoor programming to continue despite the inclement weather outside.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Total Project Cost: \$250,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [213b024d-564.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Example of pull-behind trailer with ample windows for viewing outside. The proposed project would purchase a trailer approximately 24-28 feet in length, customized to include a roll-up awning to conduct lessons in the shade....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Three Rivers Park District 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report	898a4bc9-618.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Three Rivers Park District Board of Commissioners resolution of support	4dcf6b0c-800.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Three Rivers Outdoor Recreation School photos	f90dba03-f78.pdf
Letter of support - Outdoor Recreation School	70eb9d55-83d.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

N/A

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

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

Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?

No

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?

Yes

Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to whom children's services are provided by your organization?

Yes

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:

Mandy Whiteside (Three Rivers Park District), Wendy Weirich (Three Rivers Park District) and Elise Limper (Three Rivers Park District).

Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements

N/A