

Final Abstract

Final Report Approved on October 31, 2024

M.L. 2020 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2024

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

Project Manager: Luke Reese

Affiliation: City of Austin

Mailing Address: 1304 21st St. NE

City/State/Zip: Austin, MN 55912

Phone: (507) 437-7519

E-mail: luke.reese@hormelnaturecenter.org

Website: <http://www.ci.austin.mn.us/>

Funding Source:

Fiscal Year:

Legal Citation: M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 05e

Appropriation Amount: \$225,000

Amount Spent: \$225,000

Amount Remaining: -

Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results

Over three years, funding from the ENRTF through the LCCMR enabled the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center to engage over 4,500 students outside Austin and provide 50% more summer programming. Curricula designed to foster environmental ethics reached many additional families, contributing to the protection of Minnesota's natural resources.

Overall Project Outcome and Results

The Jay C. Hormel Nature Center, operated by the City of Austin and funded by taxpayers, focuses on environmental education for local students. In 2017, a new interpretive center was completed, enhancing classroom space and establishing the center as a regional hub for exploring and learning about nature. The primary obstacle to expanding environmental education opportunities was the lack of funding for additional staff. Funding from the ENRTF through the LCCMR enabled the hiring of an additional naturalist and an intern each year for three years. This initiative aimed to engage more school groups from outside Austin and increase summer programming. The center believes that fostering a connection to the natural world through education is crucial for encouraging the protection of natural resources.

The new naturalist built relationships with various schools and districts, providing their students access to the center's

curricula. The goals included reaching at least 250 classes, with 80 being new opportunities for schools outside Austin, and an estimated 1,600 additional students each school year. By the second and third years of the grant, these goals were surpassed, with 1,687 students participating in 91 additional classes during the 2022-23 school year, and 1,924 students in 94 additional classes in 2023-24.

With the additional staff, summer programming increased, with 46 classes scheduled in summer 2023, a 50% rise from previous years. However, extreme drought and poor air quality led to the cancellation of some activities. In June 2024, the final month of the grant, 22 outdoor education classes were held, setting the pace for the summer.

This project underscores the demand for environmental education, with funding from the ENRTF enabling the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center to expand its offerings. Investments in children today will help protect Minnesota naturalist resources in the future.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

We have acknowledged the ENRTF on our website (<https://www.hormelnaturecenter.org/education-programs.html>), in our newsletter (<https://www.hormelnaturecenter.org/summer-classes.html>), and during radio interviews about regional school visits. This recognition also appears in our annual report, at city council and parks and recreation board meetings, at Friends of the Hormel Nature Center meetings, and in outreach to schools (see attached brochure). We consistently use attribution language and the ENRTF logo where appropriate. As we launch a second project, we will soon issue a media release highlighting the success of the first three years of this program.



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2020 Approved Final Report

General Information

Date: November 18, 2024

ID Number: 2020-036

Staff Lead: Tom Dietrich

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

Project Budget: \$225,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Luke Reese

Organization: City of Austin

Office Telephone: (507) 437-7519

Email: luke.reese@hormelnaturecenter.org

Web Address: <http://www.ci.austin.mn.us/>

Project Reporting

Final Report Approved: October 31, 2024

Reporting Status: Project Completed

Date of Last Action: October 31, 2024

Project Completion: June 30, 2024

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 05e

Appropriation Language: \$225,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the city of Austin to expand the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center environmental education program beyond the city of Austin to students in southeastern Minnesota for three years.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2024

Narrative

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.

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? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & 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.

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

Activities and Milestones

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

Activity Budget: \$225,000

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

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Tim Ruzek	Friends of the Hormel Nature Center	President The Friends of the Hormel Nature Center have agreed to fund the ~20% not awarded by the LCCMR committee.	No

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 Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) will be acknowledged through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the ENRTF Acknowledgement Guidelines. This will be accomplished through: social media, such as Facebook (@hormelnaturecenter) and Instagram (@hormel_nature_center), the nature center’s website (hormelnaturecenter.org), newsletter (by mail or through hormelnaturecenter.org), annual reports to the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Board, as well as other misc. media coverage such as newspaper (Austin Daily Herald) and radio (KAUS-AM).

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?

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, work to permanently fund these positions.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
Personnel										
81% of 2nd Naturalist		Bring in school groups and hold programs for outside-of-Austin kids			34%	2.43		\$130,368	-	-
83% of FY2022 Intern		Intern supporting the 2nd naturalist in growing Jay C. Hormel Nature Center education programming beyond Austin.			39%	0.83		\$31,261	-	-
81% of FY2023 Intern		Intern supporting the 2nd naturalist in growing Jay C. Hormel Nature Center education programming beyond Austin.			39%	0.81		\$31,551	-	-
78% of FY2024 Intern		Intern supporting the 2nd naturalist in growing Jay C. Hormel Nature Center education programming beyond Austin.			39%	0.78		\$31,820	-	-
							Sub Total	\$225,000	\$225,000	-
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	\$225,000	\$225,000	-

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	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
State						
			State Sub Total	-	-	-
Non-State						
Cash	Friends of the Hormel Nature Center	Inservices x 3 years	Pending	\$3,000	\$3,000	-
Cash	Friends of the Hormel Nature Center	Mentorship program for 3 years	Pending	\$12,000	\$12,000	-
Cash	Schools attending programs	Program fees generated: 80 additional groups x 20 students/group x \$5/student	Potential	\$8,000	\$8,000	-
In-Kind	Schools	Bussing 80 additional groups x \$100/bus	Potential	\$8,000	\$8,000	-
In-Kind	City of Austin	Grant administration and supervision (10% of director's time) x 3 years	Secured	\$26,150	\$26,150	-
In-Kind	City of Austin	Supplies July 2021 - June 2024	Pending	\$7,500	\$7,500	-
In-Kind	Volunteers	Volunteers assisting with school groups. 150 opportunities x 4 hours x \$13/hr x 3 years	Pending	\$23,400	\$23,400	-
In-Kind	Volunteers	Special program volunteers. 245 opportunities for 667 hours x \$10/hr x 3 years	Pending	\$20,010	\$20,010	-
Cash	Friends of the Hormel Nature Center personnel contributions over 3 years for the second intern and additional naturalist.	Approximately 19% of the total project funds (\$279,167) July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022 Intern @ \$13/hr plus 39% benefits: \$6,747 July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023 Intern @ \$13.50/hr plus 39% benefits: \$7,592 July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024 Intern @ \$14/hr plus 39% benefits: \$8,736 July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2024 naturalist @\$19 + 2% annual COLA + 34% benefits: \$31,366	Secured	\$54,167	\$54,167	-
			Non State Sub Total	\$162,227	\$162,227	-
			Funds Total	\$162,227	\$162,227	-

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 p...

Board Resolution or Letter

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

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Friends of HNC Support Letter	e5e9e831-e0b.pdf
Background Check Certification Form	dc2231c9-690.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Timeline dates were adjusted by LCCMR staff. Outcomes were adjusted following LCCMR staff recommendations in January 2020. The budget was adjusted to reflect the \$225,000 recommended by the LCCMR. Friends of the Hormel Nature Center cash match for the project was increased to reflect changes in City of Austin pay scales. A letter of support from the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center was uploaded.

Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?

N/A

Do you agree travel expenses must 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

Work Plan Amendments

No Amendments Entered

Status Update Reporting

Final Report Approved: October 31, 2024

Project Status: Project Completed

Final Status Update August 14, 2024

Date Submitted: September 5, 2024

Date Approved: September 11, 2024

Overall Update

This funding was intended to allow us to reach a greater number of students with environmental education programming, primarily students from outside of Austin. It took the 2021-22 school year to ramp up to where we knew we could be. Even for that school year, we were very close. It took into the fall semester to get staffed up and then took time to build new relationships.

By the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years, we greatly exceeded our goals of 250+ school groups total and 80 more school programs to groups from outside of Austin. We estimated we'd reach an added 1,600 students from outside of Austin and by the 2022-23 (1,687 additional non-Austin students) and 2023-24 (1,924 additional non-Austin students) school years we'd exceeded that number.

The additional staff allowed us to do more summer programs. In summer 2023, we scheduled 46 summer classes, an over 50% increase from before this funding. Extreme drought forced the cancellation of most of our canoeing/kayaking classes. We also had to cancel some classes due to poor air quality. For June 2024, in the final month of this grant, we provided 22 environmental and outdoor education summer classes.

Activity 1

Once contracts were signed in August 2021, we promoted a temporary staff member to a naturalist and hired another intern. We hoped to have 80 more school groups attending environmental education programs in the 2021-22 school year than the previous year but only reached 70 additional groups, for a total of 237 school groups for that school year. For the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years, we exceeded our goal of 250 classes participating in our environmental education programs by reaching 297 and 280 programs, respectively.

In the summer of 2022, we held 12 more summer environmental education classes, bringing the total to 40. In the summer of 2023, we scheduled 46 summer classes (our goal for this grant was 45), but we had to cancel 6 classes due to heat, drought, and air quality concerns. In the summer of 2024, we scheduled 49 summer classes (27 in June), but 5 were canceled.

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Dissemination

We have acknowledged the ENRTF on our website (<https://www.hormelnaturecenter.org/education-programs.html>), in our newsletter (<https://www.hormelnaturecenter.org/summer-classes.html>), in radio interviews when discussing the number of regional schools visiting, in the annual report, at city council meetings, at parks and rec board meetings, at Friends of the Hormel Nature Center meetings, in outreach meetings to schools (see attached brochure), and on social media. We have done so by using attribution language and the ENRTF logo where appropriate. We're beginning a second similar project and will be issuing a media release soon to talk about the success of the first 3 years of this programming, thanks to the ENRTF.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update April 1, 2024

Date Submitted: March 27, 2024

Date Approved: May 10, 2024

Overall Update

The ENRTF funding has allowed the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center (JCHNC) to maintain a staff that is 1 naturalist and 1 intern greater than what would otherwise be possible with local funding sources. This staffing has helped us reach many students attending schools from outside of Austin and grow our summer youth programming without sacrificing the environmental education and other services the JCHNC has provided for decades.

In 2023, 2,390 students from 131 classes from non-Austin schools attended Jay C. Hormel Nature Center environmental education programs. 296 total school classes (5,831 students) participated in environmental education programs during that school year. For the upcoming summer, we have 48 youth summer adventure programs scheduled. Regional schools attending JCHNC programming include Lyle, Southland, Blooming Prairie, LeRoy-Ostrander, Grand Meadow, Hayfield, Glenville-Emmons, United South Central, NRHEG, St. Charles, Stewartville, Albert Lea, Waseca, SMEC, Kasson-Mantorville, Hollandale, and Janesville Waldorf Pemberton.

Activity 1

The goals for this grant boil down to three milestones for each year of the grant.

The first is to schedule 80 additional school groups. In 2023, we reached 131 regional school groups exceeding our goal. We are reaching almost 100 more non-Austin school classes than before this funding allowed us to increase our environmental education staff.

The second is to maintain over 250 school groups per year. In 2023, 131 non-Austin classes participated in our environmental education programming. We are exceeding this goal.

The third is to add 15 additional summer programs, which makes 45 total. We planned 46 summer classes for the summer of 2023, but 6 were canceled because of heat, drought, or air quality concerns. We have 48 summer youth classes scheduled for the upcoming summer, which will meet this goal.

Dissemination

We have acknowledged the ENRTF on our website, in our newsletter, in radio interviews when talking about the number of regional schools visiting, in the annual report, at city council meetings, at parks and rec board meetings, at the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center meetings, in outreach meetings to schools, and on social media. We have done so by using attribution language and the ENRTF logo where appropriate. Having a second similar project selected for funding has given us additional reasons to talk about the success of this program thanks to the ENRTF.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update October 1, 2023

Date Submitted: September 29, 2023

Date Approved: January 17, 2024

Overall Update

The additional staffing of 1 intern and 1 naturalist continue to help us reach many outside of Austin schools. We are beginning a new school year. In the 2022-23 year, 1,742 students from 97 classes from outside of Austin schools attended Jay C. Hormel Nature Center environmental education programs. 253 total school classes (5,632 students) participated in environmental education programs during that school year. Additionally, last summer we planned 46 summer adventure programs but 6 were canceled because of heat, drought, or air quality concerns. Regional schools attending JCHNC programming include Lyle, Southland, Blooming Prairie, LeRoy-Ostrander, Grand Meadow, Hayfield, Glenville-Emmons, United South Central, NRHEG, St. Charles, Stewartville, Albert Lea, Waseca, SMEC, Kasson-Mantorville, Hollandale, and Janesville Waldorf Pemberton.

Activity 1

The goals for this grant boil down to three milestones for each year of the grant.

The first is to schedule 80 additional school groups. We are currently at 97 regional school groups. We continue to be very close to tripling the number of classes from non-Austin schools.

The second is to maintain over 250 school groups per year, we were at 253 in 2022-23, so we continue to meet this goal.

The third is to add 15 additional summer programs, which makes 45 total. We planned 46 summer classes for the summer of 2023, but 6 were canceled because of heat, drought, or air quality concerns.

Dissemination

We have acknowledged the ENRTF on our website, in our newsletter, in radio interviews when talking about the number of regional schools visiting, in the annual report, at city council meetings, at parks and rec board meetings, at the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center meetings, in outreach meetings to schools, and on social media. We have done so by using attribution language and the ENRTF logo where appropriate. Having a second similar project selected for funding has given us additional reasons to talk about the success of this program thanks to the ENRTF.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update April 1, 2023

Date Submitted: March 30, 2023

Date Approved: May 5, 2023

Overall Update

We are approximately halfway through this grant. The total number of classes the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center has seen has increased from 198 to 279, a 41% increase. Classes from outside of Austin have increased from 35 to 99, a 183% increase. For the summer of 2023, we have scheduled and expect to meet our goal of 15 additional summer classes. Jay C. Hormel Nature Center (JCHNC) has grown its reach and is serving, many on a regular basis, a much larger number of schools. Regional schools attending JCHNC programming include: Lyle, Southland, Blooming Prairie, LeRoy-Ostrander, Grand Meadow, Hayfield, Glenville-Emmons, United South Central, NRHEG, St. Charles, Stewartville, Albert Lea, Waseca, SMEC, Kasson-Mantorville, Hollandale, and Janesville Waldorf Pemberton.

Activity 1

The goals for this grant boil down to three milestones for each year of the grant.

The first is to schedule 80 additional school groups. We have gotten to 64 additional school groups, but our total number of regional school classes is up to 99. Our original goal of 80 might be difficult to achieve, but we are very close to tripling the number of classes from non-Austin schools.

The second is to maintain over 250 school groups per year, we are at 279, so we have met this goal.

The third is to add 15 additional summer programs, which makes 45 total. We have planned 46 summer classes for the summer of 2023.

Dissemination

We have acknowledged the ENRTF on our website, in our newsletter, in radio interviews when talking about the number of regional schools visiting, in the annual report, at city council meetings, at parks and rec board meetings, at the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center meetings, in outreach meetings to schools, and on social media. We have done so by using attribution language and the ENRTF logo where appropriate. We talked about the number of additional kids visiting due to the ENRTF in a Twin Cities Live segment in January.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update October 1, 2022

Date Submitted: October 7, 2022

Date Approved: October 28, 2022

Overall Update

By the end of this grant, we will host 80 additional school groups and add 15 additional summer programs (totaling 45 summer programs.) We made good progress toward that goal in the 2021-22 school year and with 2022 summer programs.

Schools are starting to schedule field trips again. One barrier we've found is that following the pandemic some schools are focussing on student behaviors and are hesitant to send their kids on field trips. We have reached out to 18 schools and we have even had schools from farther away like Stewartville and Mankato reaching out to us for programming. Thirteen of those schools are either sending more students for Jay C. Hormel Nature Center environmental education programming or are coming for the first time.

Activity 1

In the 2021-22 school year, we had 94 class visits from outside of Austin. 55 of those were new because of the outreach work made possible by this grant, accounting for 905 out of the 2,556 students visiting the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center from outside of Austin. The number of students participating in all classes grew from 3,249 to 4,871 by the end of the school year. To date, we have had 17 outside of Austin classes onsite accounting for 407 students. Of those, 11 classes for 242 students are new to our programs made possible by this grant. We are on pace to have 29 new classes by the end of the fall and are on a good pace to meet 80 new classes by the end of this grant.

For the summer of 2022, we held 38 classes, up from 28 held in the summer of 2021. Based on participation in 2022 summer classes, we are confident that we can host 45 summer classes for 2023.

Dissemination

We have acknowledged the ENRTF on our website, in our newsletter, in radio interviews, in the annual report, at city council meetings, at parks and rec board meetings, at the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center meetings, in outreach meetings to schools, and on social media. We have done so by using attribution language and the ENRTF logo where appropriate. We are working to have local media do a longer form story in print on the impact of this program, made possible by the ENRTF, to the region.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update April 1, 2022

Date Submitted: April 22, 2022

Date Approved: April 25, 2022

Overall Update

By the end of this grant, we will host 80 additional school groups and add 15 additional summer programs (totaling 45 programs). We are still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, but we made good progress during the 2021-22 school year. Some schools were not scheduling field trips in the fall due to the pandemic, but that barrier seems to have come down. Busing costs are another barrier that the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center is helping schools get past. Donors have created a fund to help rural schools that need assistance with busing costs.

The efforts have been worth while as most of the growth in our education programming over the last school year came from rural communities in the region. Ultimately, while we will be a little shy of our milestones for this first year, I am confident that they are achievable.

Activity 1

With what is has been completed from September 2021 to present as well as what is scheduled for the remainder of the school year, we will have 70 additional class visits (237 total) over the previous year (167 total). 53 of those additional classes are from new schools from outside of Austin. The number of students participating in school programs grew from 3,249 to a projected 4,733 (by the end of the school year) in the first year of the grant.

For summer of 2022, we have scheduled 40 summer classes which is up from the 28 held in the summer of 2021. Based on lower than expected participation numbers in 2021, we chose to limit our summer programming to 40 classes and build toward a goal of 45 in the next two years.

Dissemination

We have acknowledged the ENRTF on our website, in our newsletter, on radio interviews, in the annual report, and on social media. We have done so by using attribution language and the ENRTF logo where appropriate. At the conclusion of the school year, we will post a story on social media highlighting the success of the first year of this grant. I expect that local media (likely newspaper and potentially tv) will publish a story along those lines as well.