**PROJECT TITLE:**

**I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

The River Watch program is a high school team-based program, the 2018-2019 school year is the second year of the program, through which each team conducts water quality monitoring at 3-5 sites on the main channel or a tributary river or stream of the Minnesota River.

Water is monitored for nitrates, dissolved oxygen, phosphorous, clarity, bacteria, sediment content, and

flow levels will also be recorded and data reported to the MNPCA.

This project is a continuation of a River Watch program Friends of the Minnesota Valley launched with

six high school based teams during the 2017-2018 school year and continued with 14 teams during the 2018-2019 school year. These Classroom-based teams typically include 20 to 30 students.

A major outcome of the River Watch program is building a stronger public awareness and public support for

river water quality improvement and associated land management improvement that is essential if the Minnesota River water quality and sediment issues are to be successfully addressed. The River Watch program is modeled after the highly successful River Watch program operated by the International Water Institute on the Red River.

Another outcome is to provide a hands-on learning experience for students that will lead them to a greater

understanding and appreciation of water quality and related issues and provide them with technical knowledge and skills.

Overall GOALS

One: Conduct monthly water quality monitoring using PCA protocols and report the data to MNPCA to enable

state and local units of government to make data drive decisions to improve water quality and reduce sediment

transfer. Program will be expanded to gathering other environmental data such as macro invertebrate counting.

Two: Increase the amount of reliable water quality data to policy makers and the public.

Three: Engage student teams and the public in a water quality and related improvement projects in their area.

**II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

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| --- | --- |
| **Activity 1 Title: Recruit Teams and Train Team Leaders****Description:**Recruit teams until the target of 20 High School based teams is reached, identify a team leader, and train the team leaders to oversee team water quality monitoring efforts and other activities.**ENRTF BUDGET:**$5,000 |  |
| **Outcome** | **Completion Date** |
| *1*. Remainder of 20 teams recruited for the 2019-2020 school year 14 teams active in 2018-2019 (Classroom-based teams are 20 to 30 students - averaging 23 students)  | August 1, 2019 |
| *2.* 2018-2019 Team Leader training provided including refresher training for returning team leaders | *August 15, 2019* |
|  |  |

**ACTIVITY 2: Title: Purchase consumable materials and supplies as needed**

**Description:** Purchase YSI Sonde calibration chemicals and other consumable supplies

**ENRTF BUDGET:** $5,000

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| --- | --- |
| **Outcome** | **Completion Date** |
| 1. Needed chemicals are on hand to conduct monitoring
 | June 30, 2022 |

**Activity 3: Title:** **Plan and conduct monthly water quality monitoring and reporting at three or more locations per team.**

**Description:** River Watch Coordinatorwill work with each team to identify 2-3 monitoring sites, plan the schedule of monitoring, accompany teams on monitoring trips, and assure data submission to MPCA.

**ENRTF BUDGET:** $80,000

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Outcome** | **Completion Date** |
| 1. Monitoring sites for 20 teams are selected, mapped and necessary approvals secured
 | August 2021 |
| 1. Monitoring by all 20 teams conducted up to monthly at 2-3 sites per team.
 | Ongoing until June 2022 |
| 1. Collected data submitted to MPCA
 | Ongoing until June 2022 |
| 1. Each team will identify additional projects such as macroinvertebrate counting and complete additional projects.
 | Ongoing until June 2022 |

**Activity 4: Title: Plan and convene two annual Minnesota River Basin Wide Forums**

**Description:** Convene two annual forums at which each team will present its experiences, report their data, and share data analysis. All state and local water quality policy makers and all other elected officials will be invited along with news media.

**ENRTF BUDGET:** $10,000

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Convene 2020-2021 school year annual River Watch Forum
 | June 2021 |
| 1. Convene 2021-2022 school year annual River Watch Forum
 | June 2022 |

**III. PROJECT PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS:**

**Minnesota Izaak Walton League**

**Izaak Walton League of America**

**Minnesota Valley Chapter Izaak Walton League**

**Water Resources Center, Minnesota State University - Mankato**

**Minnesota River Congress**

**Numerous (Up to 20) School Districts**

**Minnesota DNR**

**IV. LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:**

Friends of the Minnesota Valley is committed to support the River Watch program by providing office space, office equipment and support, project administration and oversight. Allocation of Friends of the Minnesota Valley administrative staff time to this project will be set at $10,000 per year.

A request is pending to the Minnesota Legislature for ongoing long term funding for River Watch, The Red River- River Watch program receives a significant appropriation/MPCA grant, far greater than the amount requested at this time of LCCMR. Although several Minnesota River basin legislators have warmly received this funding request, this funding request **will not be approved** for the 2020-2021 biennium because the request was not initiated in time to be included in an agency budget request. Long term, legislative approval of a River Watch funding request is quite likely.

ENRTF funding for another two year cycle is essential to keep the program operating.

**V. SEE ADDITIONAL PROPOSAL COMPONENTS:**

**A. Proposal Budget Spreadsheet Attached**

**B. Visual Component or Map attached**

**C. Parcel List Spreadsheet Not Applicable**

**D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements Not Applicable**

**E. Research Addendum (Not required at proposal submission stage. Required later in process, if proposal is recommended. Staff will provide further information at that time)**

**F. Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description Resume Attached**

**G. Letter or Resolution Attached**

**H. Financial Capacity 990 attached**