



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2025 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2025-134

Proposal Title: Camp Parsons Mississippi Summer

Project Manager Information

Name: Katy Nelson

Organization: Phyllis Wheatley Community Center

Office Telephone: (612) 400-1447

Email: katyn@phylliswheatley.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Phyllis Wheatley Community Center (PWCC) will provide environmental education to Minneapolis youth through Camp Parsons Mississippi Summer, a program that fosters connections to nature and encourages responsible stewardship.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$225,000

Proposed Project Completion: August 31, 2027

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary Category: Environmental Education (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

Narrative

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

PWCC is a 100-year old organization that since the 1930s has provided opportunities for Black children and families to explore the outdoors and benefit from immersion in nature. While the Twin Cities region is rich in parks and recreation opportunities, these resources are not equitably available to communities of color, which continue to experience cultural and economic exclusion. The families we serve reside in an urban area where violence is prevalent and public safety an urgent concern. It is uncommon for children and families to spend time outdoors and form connections to nature. As a result, PWCC has for decades designed and implemented summer camps and family programs that are both restorative and educational. From 1957 to the early 2000s, these programs took place at PWCC's Carver County property, Camp Katharine Parsons. Although the Camp was shuttered for some time, we are now in a five-year process of restoring the grounds. In the meantime, PWCC has relaunched programming focused on outdoor equity. Our goal is to create pathways for all Minnesotans to become land stewards by increasing access to natural resources, and exploring environmental issues through education and recreation.

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.

PWCC creates accessible, culturally-appropriate programming that encourages young people to explore the outdoors, connect with nature, and take responsibility as environmental stewards. We offer summer activities for youth that expose them to natural resources, introduce them to environmental concepts, and provide meaningful engagement during out-of-school time that might otherwise be unstructured or unsupervised.

During the grant period, we will conduct Camp Parsons Mississippi Summer, a program held annually between June and August. 5 two-week sessions will take place each summer, in 2025, 2026 and 2027. Bus trips will take campers from PWCC to sites along the Mississippi River located within the Twin Cities Metro, including Coon Rapids Dam, Fort Snelling State Park and Harriet Island. Throughout this journey, campers will learn about local ecology and the history of the Mississippi watershed. We will discuss industrialization along the river, the environmental harm it caused, and how it impacts the shape of our communities today. Cross-curricular activities will help students gain an understanding of policy decisions, and how they have affected access to environmental resources. Students will come away understanding the interconnectedness of people and water systems. They will also develop a deeper sense of responsibility to protect the local environment.

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?

The proposed project will have the following outcomes:

Increased awareness of local ecology including water resources

Expanded awareness of environmental issues in a historical, social and cultural context

Increased knowledge and skills that supports healthy and sustainable lifestyles, and resilient communities

Transformed attitudes regarding care, stewardship and conservation

Increased opportunities for recreation in the outdoors

Increased engagement by communities of color with a focus on inclusive, culturally-appropriate and restorative activities

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Camp Parsons Mississippi Summer

Activity Budget: \$225,000

Activity Description:

PWCC will offer five 2-week camps focused on environmental education and exploration of the Mississippi River where it passes through the Twin Cities. Each year, 200 youth ages 8-12 will benefit from excursions along the river, guided by educational partners delivering a high quality curriculum that includes the following topics: watersheds, the primary biomes in Minnesota, the history of industrialization and deforestation, birds and wildlife, and social justice issues related to environmental policy, public health and water quality. Campers will gain an appreciation of the Mississippi as a recreational corridor with the opportunity to enjoy boating and being on the water. They will broaden their worldviews by exploring natural spaces outside of their urban neighborhoods, fostering a connection to nature that supports healthy lifestyles and resilient communities.

In 2026, we will segment the campers to create unique opportunities for older participants who are returning to the program. We also plan to add paddling experiences on the Mississippi river, available on the weekends for families. This will enhance the programming by adding a multi-generational component.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Summer Camp 2025	August 31, 2025
Summer Camp 2026	August 31, 2026
Summer Camp 2027	August 31, 2027

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Molly Coddling	Department of Natural Resources	Education partner (serving as a guest instructor/presenter)	No
To be determined	Sierra Club	Education partner (serving as a guest instructor/presenter)	No
To be determined	To be determined	Providing First Nations perspective on history and culture in the curriculum	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 work be funded?

Grant funds will allow PWCC to sustain and strengthen our environmental education programs, which will remain a key component of Phyllis Wheatley’s holistic family services in the long-term. We have a strong record of success in establishing public and private partnerships to fund our no- and low- cost programming, benefiting low income Black families on the Northside of Minneapolis. Philanthropic support remains our largest revenue source.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Katy Nelson

Job Title: Senior Director of Development and Communications

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

As Senior Director of Development, Katy is responsible for managing grant awards, ensuring compliance and reporting to funders.

Organization: Phyllis Wheatley Community Center

Organization Description:

Phyllis Wheatley Community Center (PWCC) provides comprehensive programs in child development, life-long learning and family support. As a community center that has served the historically Black neighborhoods of North Minneapolis for the last 100 years, we are committed to providing a safe gathering space where community members can receive culturally competent, trauma-informed services that set them on a pathway to health, healing and empowerment.

Our mission is to create pathways for individuals to discover their strengths and take control of their futures. We help children and families recover from challenges and overcome disparities through programs that support social and emotional wellbeing, success in school, and economic self-sufficiency. Our vision is a vibrant community in which all families experience prosperity and wellness – through educational achievement, meaningful and secure work, wealth to pass on to their children, resilience in the face of adversity, and a support system that leaves no one behind.

As part of our commitment to supporting health and wellbeing, PWCC provides opportunities for restorative, educational and recreational experiences in nature - in Minneapolis and at our rural Camp Parsons in Carver County.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Camp Director		Designs, implements and manages the program. \$13,720 x 3 years (2025, 2026, 2027)			0%	0.6		\$41,160
Summer Coordinator 1		Oversee staff, manage day to day operations during camp sessions \$6,000 x 3 years (2025, 2026, 2027)			0%	0.36		\$18,000
Summer Coordinator 2		Oversee staff, manage day to day operations during camp sessions \$6,000 x 3 years (2025, 2026, 2027)			0%	0.36		\$18,000
Camp Counselor 1		Implements activities and supervises campers \$2,400 x 3 years (2025, 2026, 2027)			0%	0.24		\$7,200
Camp Counselor 2		Implements activities and supervises campers \$2,400 x 3 years			0%	0.24		\$7,200
Camp Counselor 3		Implements activities and supervises campers \$2,400 x 3 years			0%	0.24		\$7,200
Camp Counselor 4		Implements activities and supervises campers \$2,400 x 3 years			0%	0.24		\$7,200
Camp Counselor 5		Implements activities and supervises campers \$2,400 x 3 years			0%	0.24		\$7,200
							Sub Total	\$113,160
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	First Nations Educational Partner \$2,500 / yr x 3 years				0.12		\$7,500
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Bus Transportation Services \$13,000 / yr x 3 years				0.48		\$39,000
Wilderness Inquiry	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Boating Services - family paddling opportunities \$5,000 / year x 3 years				0.12		\$15,000
							Sub Total	\$61,500

Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Supplies: Waterfront Activities / Park Admissions \$2,800 x 3 years (2025, 2026, 2027)	Camp activities					\$8,400
	Tools and Supplies	Supplies: Camper Snacks and Lunches \$9,210 x 3 years	Feeding campers during sessions					\$27,630
	Tools and Supplies	Supplies: Camper tshirts and water bottles \$4,170 x 3 years	Camp activities					\$12,510
	Tools and Supplies	Supplies: Safety \$500 x 3 years	Safety					\$1,500
	Tools and Supplies	First Aid and CPR training \$100 x 3 years	Safety and staff preparedness					\$300
							Sub Total	\$50,340
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
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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
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Total Project Cost: \$225,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [952825e8-74b.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Promotional flyer for the 2024 Camp Parsons Mississippi Summer...

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Form 990	c81ac46e-729.pdf
Secretary of State Proof of Good Standing	861a6ed8-946.pdf
Audit	4352eb57-103.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Authorization	afd83542-56c.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Letter of Support from MN Land Trust	8f01b68e-86e.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

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:

Aaron Raivo-Lynch, Senior Director of Camp Parsons

