



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting
Wednesday, September 21, 2022

Agenda Item

Item 6. H. – Education & Outreach

Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

Summary

LMRWD staff has developed a mini-grant program for educators. Jen Dullum, the LMRWD director of Education & Outreach, said educators expressed a desire for a funding program that would provide money to assist with natural resources education.

A mini-grant program has been developed, that if approved by the LMRWD Board of Managers, will provide that funding.

Attachments

Proposed LMRWD Educator Mini-Grant Program

Recommended Action

Motion to approve Educator Mini-Grant Program and authorize distribution to schools serving the LMRWD

Technical Memorandum

To: Linda Loomis, administrator
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District

From: Jen Dullum, education and outreach coordinator
Della Schall Young, PMP, CPESC

Date: September 9, 2022

Re: Establishment of the LMRWD Educator Mini-Grant Program

As part of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD) 2022 Public Education and Outreach Plan, Young Environmental Consulting Group (Young Environmental) continues outreach to local schools and nonprofit organizations investigating opportunities for collaboration and outreach programming opportunities. In response to the feedback received from the schools and nonprofits listed below and subsequent discussions with you, Young Environmental has developed a mini-grant program for individuals and groups providing educational services for consideration. A full list of contacted schools is attached for your reference (see Attachment 1). Schools with existing educational programming offered by other entities were not contacted.

- Northview Elementary School, Eagan
- Pilot Knob STEM Elementary School, Eagan
- Thomas Lake Elementary School, Eagan
- Black Hawk Middle School, Eagan
- Thomas Jefferson High School, Bloomington
- Two Rivers High School, Mendota Heights
- Dodge Nature Center, West St. Paul
- Izaak Walton League, Minnesota Valley Chapter
- Minnesota Dragonfly Society, regional
- Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management Area, Bloomington
- Nature Enthusiations, Bloomington

The LMRWD Educator Mini-Grant Program (Program) is designed to assist local educators and to further the LMRWD's mission and goals of water quality restoration,

groundwater conservation, and wildlife connectivity while increasing public awareness of the Minnesota River and its unique natural resources. The Program is designed to streamline outreach to, and evaluation of, funding requests from schools and nonprofits. The program directly aligns with LMRWD watershed management plan Goal 9, Policy 9.1, Strategy 9.1.2, which specify the development of an educational outreach program to familiarize the public with LMRWD activities. The Program supports this goal by providing schools, nonprofits, educators, and students with funding opportunities for equipment, supplies, teacher training, field trip transportation, and more. The Program materials consist of an informational handout, the application, evaluation materials, and the back-end reimbursement and reporting request form.

Informational Handout: The informational handout (Attachment 2) introduces the program, which provides 10 grants annually, each up to \$500, to offset the cost of materials and programming that focus on water resources. Eligibility to receive funding will be determined by the following:

- The projects, programming, or activities must take place within the watershed district or at a location within the boundaries of a member city.
- The projects, programming, or activities must have a water resources or wildlife habitat component.
- Recipients are eligible for only one grant per academic year.

Application: The application (Attachment 3) will be reviewed twice a year and will be awarded on a competitive basis while funds last.

Evaluation Materials: Attachment 4 is the material LMRWD would use to objectively evaluate funding applications. Grants will be awarded in the form of a refund for eligible purchases which may include, but are not limited to, equipment, supplies and in-class materials, field trips and transportation, guest speakers, teacher training, and program sponsorship funding. Examples of activities not eligible for funding include marketing materials for self-promotion, staff payroll, and funding for unspecified future activities or projects.

Reimbursement and Reporting Request Form: Recipients must complete the reimbursement and reporting request form (Attachment 5) to receive payment.

Summary Request

Young Environmental respectfully asks you to review the information provided for consideration. If approved by the managers, Young Environmental will address

comments, if any, and release the application to commence on or before September 30, 2022, with evaluation and award recommendations provided to the managers at the November board meeting.

Attachments:

1. Schools contacted
2. Informational handout
3. Application
4. Evaluation materials
5. Reimbursement and reporting request form

<u>Schools Contacted</u>	
Bloomington	Mendota Heights
Indian Mounds Elementary	Friendly Hills Middle School
Kennedy High School	Mendota Elementary School
Oak Grove Elementary	Somerset Elementary School
Oak Grove Middle School	Two Rivers High School
Olson Elementary	
Olson Middle School	Shakopee
Thomas Jefferson High School	Eagle Creek Elementary
Westwood Elementary	East Middle School
	Red Oak Elementary
Burnsville	Shakopee High School
Burnsville High School	Sweeney Elementary
	Tokata Learning Center
Carver	West Middle School
Carver Elementary	
Chaska	
St. John's Lutheran	
Eagan	
Black Hawk Middle School	
Dakota Hills Middle School	
Deerwood Elementary School	
Eagan High School	
Glacier Hills Elementary School	
Northview Elementary School	
Oak Ridge Elementary School	
Pilot Knob STEM Magnet	
Pinewood Elementary School	
Rahn Elementary School	
Red Pine Elementary School	
Thomas Lake Elementary School	
Woodland Elementary School	



Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Educator Mini-Grant Program

As part of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District's (LMRWD) 2022 Public Education and Outreach Plan, this Educator Mini-Grant Program (the "Program") is designed to assist local educators and further the LMRWD's mission and goals of water quality restoration, groundwater conservation, and wildlife connectivity, while increasing public awareness of the Minnesota River and its unique natural resources. The Program, as designed, streamlines outreach and evaluation of funding requests from schools and nonprofits. The Program directly aligns with LMRWD watershed management plan Goal 9, Policy 9.1, Strategy 9.1.2, which specifies the development of an educational outreach program to familiarize the public with LMRWD activities.

The Program provides grants annually up to \$500 to help offset the cost of materials and programming that focuses on water resource themes. Grants are awarded as a refund for purchases made. Receipts and a project report must be provided for refund. Eligibility to receive funding will be based on the following:

- The applicant must be located within the LMRWD or a member city
- Activities and projects must have a water resources or wildlife habitat component
- Recipients are eligible for only one grant per academic year
- Receipts and a project report must be provided for refund

Grant examples include, but are not limited to, equipment, supplies and in-class materials, field trips and transportation, guest speakers, teacher training, and program sponsorship funding. Examples of activities **not** eligible for funding include marketing materials for self-promotion, staff payroll, and funding for future undetermined activities and projects.

Deadlines to Apply for a Grant

Grant funds are available for the 2022–2023 academic year. The application will be released twice during the academic year with deadlines on October 21, 2022, and February 3, 2023, by 4 p.m. Applications are awarded on a competitive basis while funds last.

How it works

1. Develop your activity or project idea, complete the Program application, and submit it to the LMRWD per the instructions on or before the specified deadlines.
2. The application materials will be reviewed and evaluated. Applicants will be called or emailed with questions. A timely response to inquiries is required for consideration.
3. Applicants will be contacted via email; preliminary board recommendations will be shared with them, and they will be extended an invitation to attend the board meeting where their application will be considered by the LMRWD board.

4. Following consideration by the LMRWD board, the applicant will be emailed the decision of the LMRWD board.
5. If successful, complete the proposed activity or project, remembering to take lots of photos and save receipts.
6. Complete and submit the reimbursement and reporting request form.
7. Following a review of the project report and reimbursement request material, the applicant will be contacted if information is missing. Once all requirements are satisfied, payment will be transmitted.

For questions or more information, contact info@lowermnriverwd.org.



Educator Mini-Grant Program Application

Name of School/Organization:

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

Phone:

Describe your current role?

If you are a student, please provide the name and email of your supervising educator.

Address of School/Organization

Street Address:

Address line 2:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Name and Address Where Activity Will Take Place (if Different from Above)

Street Address:

Address line 2:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

What age(s) are the participants?

K–5th grade

6–12th grade

18+ years

Senior

Estimated number of participants:

Describe your proposed activity or project and how it relates to water resources and wildlife habitat education. Include project goals and learning objectives for participants.

When is this activity/project scheduled to take place?

Total requested amount (maximum \$500):

\$

Specify how funds will be allocated (e.g. supplies, materials, and transportation):

I understand that if my funding request is approved, I must complete and submit the Program Project Reporting and Reimbursement form to receive payment. Any photos submitted may be used by the LMRWD in future communications.

Signature:

Date:



Educator Mini-Grant Program Application Evaluation Form

Purpose

This document provides information on the funding decision process for the educator mini-grant program application.

Screening

All applications received on or before the deadline will be prescreened. Staff and members of the Citizen Advisory Committee will then review applications based on the project quality metrics below. Each application will be given a numerical score by each reviewing member. While funds last, funding recommendations will be presented to the Board of Managers using the assigned scores.

Incomplete or late applications will not be considered for funding.

Scoring

Applicants who do not meet the required prescreening criteria will not be considered for funding (i.e., if there is a “no” response to any of the questions). Applications who meet prescreening eligibility are then scored numerically based on project quality. Project quality will be ranked as follows:

Five or more points..... Forward to managers for funding approval

Under five points..... Will not be considered for funding

Note: Instructions on this form are for grant reviewers. No action is required by grant applicants.

Eligibility Prescreening

Is the applicant located within the LMRWD or a member city?Yes/No

Is this the first mini-grant for this recipient for the current academic year?.....Yes/No

Are all application questions complete?Yes/No

Project Quality

Instructions for reviewer: Rate all questions on a 0–2 scale and calculate the total score.

How satisfactory is the level of detail in the project application?

very unsatisfactory (0) (1) (2) very satisfactory

How well does this project address the LMRWD goals around education and awareness relating to water quality, water conservation, and wildlife habitat?

very unsatisfactory (0) (1) (2) very satisfactory

How well does the activity or project enhance participant learning and engagement?

not well (0) (1) (2) very well

Does the proposed activity or project seem like a sensible use of funds to further LMRWD goals?

very unreasonable (0) (1) (2) very reasonable

Total Score	_____
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Educator Mini-Grant Program Reimbursement and Reporting Request Form

Name of School/Organization:

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

Phone:

Address of School/Organization

Street Address:

Address line 2:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

When and where did the activity/project take place?

Describe how your activity or project engaged participants?

Total number of participants:

List your relevant expenses:

Refund amount (cannot be more than the original award amount):

\$

Please provide information for the check recipient:

First Name:

Last Name:

Street Address:

Address line 2:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Please submit photos of your activity or project in action. Include the photographer's name in the photo file name and email to admin@lowermnriverwd.org.