

1993 Project Abstract

FOR THE PERIOD ENDING JUNE 30, 1995

This project was supported by the MN Future Resources Fund.

TITLE: Expanded Crosby Farm Park Nature Program - Continuation
PROGRAM MANAGER: Ruth Schumi (October 31, 1994 - June 30, 1995)
Ed Olsen (July 1993 - October 30, 1994)
ORGANIZATION: City of Saint Paul, Division of Parks and Recreation
LEGAL CITATION: M.L. 93 Ch. 172, Sect. 14, Subd. 7(m).
APPROP. AMOUNT: \$91,000

JUL 06 1995

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

To (a) enlarge to scope of the nature study program at Crosby Park by making use of the Como Zoo and Conservatory and (b) continue to develop an Environmental Education curriculum suitable for Saint Paul elementary schools.

OVERALL PROJECT RESULTS

The nature study programs held on site at Crosby Park and Como Zoo and Conservatory as well as outreach programs at schools and other locations reached 19,971 learners of all ages between July 1, 1993 and June 30, 1995. Two naturalists, one working full time out of the Crosby Park Nature Center and one working half time out of Como Zoo and Conservatory, conducted programs for youth, adults, seniors and families. Both formal education (classes for school groups - elementary through college) and informal education programs were provided. Informal education classes were offered to youth, families, adults and seniors: for the general public and youth-serving and other organizations. Some informal programs were special events, sponsored by Crosby Park Nature Center. The naturalists also participated in other community special events. The naturalists were assisted by volunteers; many of the programs were conducted by volunteers. The naturalists also assisted the Como Zoo Docents with their "Rain Forest Walk" and "Summer Safari". Volunteers helped with Crosby Park restoration and preservation projects, including removal of purple loosestrife and buckthorn, installation of wood duck boxes and general park clean-up. Several organizations and corporations were involved with projects at Crosby Park throughout the two years of this project: Minnesota Waterfowl Association, University of Saint Thomas Alumni, Quebecore, Audubon Society and Sierra Club.

The work program emphasized reaching inner city residents. Although the naturalists reached low income youth through school programs, in general, low income youth and families did not attend informal programs. We recommend that environmental education programs who wish to address the need for providing programs for low income participants to develop mutually beneficial relationships with youth-serving organizations who serve low income youth. The youth-serving organization would be responsible for recruiting and transporting the youth to the nature center for activities, as well as assisting with supervision. This model has been used successfully in 1995 at Como Conservatory through its General Mills Foundation funded After-School Art Partnership program.

Developing and evaluating programs and curriculum were a key feature of the work plan. Although a variety of programs were taught, much of the curriculum remains to be written formally. In addition, teachers and the public are requesting pre and post program information, activity sheets, etc. We recommend that all program curriculum be written. More emphasis is needed on writing curriculum suitable for others to use, by other naturalists, college interns and volunteers. Formal program evaluation was delayed until 1995; evaluation should have been an integral part of the program from its inception. We believe attention to these details (curriculum development and formal evaluation) early during the two year period is important, building a foundation of curriculum and ensuring timely feedback, so that program and curriculum revisions can be made.

PROJECTS RESULTS USE AND DISSEMINATION

A Five Year (1995 - 2000) Education Plan is being developed for Como Conservatory, Como Zoo and Crosby Park and Nature Center, starting with the Como Zoo and Conservatory Needs and Mission Statement. We are currently evaluating the current programs ("what is"), making recommendations ("what should be"), and developing goals and objectives, strategies and a budget. A process will be followed before implementation: with the opportunity for many presentations, discussion, and revisions made during the next quarter of 1995.

JUL 06 1995

July 1, 1995

LCMR Final Workprogram Update Report

I. **Project Title:** Expanded Crosby Farm Park Nature Program - Continuation

Program Manager: Ruth Schumi
Division of Parks and Recreation
City of Saint Paul
1325 Aida Place
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103
(612) 488-9646

A. Legal Citation: M.L. 93 Ch. 172, Sect. 14, Subd. 7(m).

Total Biennial LCMR Budget: \$91,000
Balance \$0

This appropriation is from the Future Resources Fund to the Commissioner of Education for a contract with the City of Saint Paul to accelerate the nature study program established at Crosby Farm Park utilizing the Como Zoo, Como Conservatory and Crosby Farm Nature Park.

B. LMIC Compatible Data Language: Not applicable.

C. Match Requirement: Not applicable.

II. **Narrative:**

There are numerous nature centers in the metropolitan area; however, they are all located in suburban areas of the Twin Cities metro area. Many inner city families lack the transportation capabilities to reach these outlying nature centers. This enhanced nature program will utilize three facilities, located in the inner city region, that are all readily accessible by public transportation, to provide inner city residents with learning opportunities regarding Minnesota's natural resources and how to appreciate and protect those resources.

III. **Statement of Objectives:**

A. Enlarge the scope of the nature study program at Crosby Park by making use of the Como Zoo and Conservatory.

B. Continue to develop an Environmental Education curriculum suitable for Saint Paul elementary schools.

IV. **Objectives:**

A. Enlarge the scope of the nature study program at Crosby Park by making use of the Como Zoo and Como Conservatory.

A. 1. Narrative: One full time and one part time naturalist will be hired to conduct year round nature classes and programs for adults and children at three inner city facilities. (An intensive effort will be made to supplement LCMR funding for the naturalist assistant from other funding sources, such as grants, metropolitan park funds, general budget, etc.)

A. 2. Procedures: Enhanced, year round nature programming for adults, children and families will be implemented at Como Zoo and Como Conservatory in addition to the present programming at Crosby Nature Park. In addition, summer workshops for children K through 6 will be offered at the three facilities. Interpretive exhibits at all three facilities will be developed, including photos, slide and video shows, animals and historic information. The increased personnel and additional facilities will enable this program to reach even more people than it does now. In order to make these programs attractive to all people, the programs at these three facilities will be offered at little or no cost. Special emphasis will be made to recruit participants at inner city schools, recreation centers and day care centers. A new introductory brochure describing the new and enlarged programs that will be offered at the three facilities will be developed and widely distributed throughout the city. Volunteers will be recruited to help with all aspects of the program such as greeting visitors, answering questions, teaching, distributing information, and etc.

A. 3. Budget:
a. Amount Budgeted: \$45,500
b. Balance 7/1/95: \$0

A. 4. Timeline for Products/Tasks: July 1, 93 Jan 94 June 94 Jan 95 June 95

Hire naturalists and develop nature classes for children and adults	.....			
Conduct summer daytime nature classes for children	.....		.....		.....
Conduct evening and weekend nature programs for families	.....				.....

A. 5. Status:

The nature study programs held on site at Crosby Park and Como Zoo and Conservatory, as well as outreach programs at schools and other locations reached 19,971 learners of all ages between July 1, 1993 and June 30, 1995. In the last six months, between January and June 1995, programs were conducted at Como Zoo and Como Conservatory, Crosby Nature Center and at schools and other locations: the programs reached 10,520 learners at Como and 1,792 learners at Crosby. The Naturalists were assisted by a Volunteer Coordinator and many volunteers and organizations. As of November 1, 1994, the naturalists were supervised by an Education Coordinator, through the new Como Environmental Education unit of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation. The Education Coordinator also supervises the education volunteers at Como Zoo and Como Conservatory's new Education program which includes an Artist-in-Residency. With this organizational change, the naturalists were enabled to work in partnership with staff and volunteers on programs such as "Rain Forest Walk", "Summer Safari", the Eisenhower Grant - "Using Como Zoo and Conservatory to Promote Inquiry Teaching", and the General Mills Foundation funded "Art Partnership with Como Park Elementary School". The naturalists worked with the Como Zoo Docents, the University of Minnesota (Science Centrum), the Minnesota Waterfowl Association and the University of Saint Thomas Alumni on programs and projects. These partnerships will assist in reaching more learners in the years to come: for example, 23 Saint Paul Public School elementary school teachers, through the Eisenhower Grant, have learned to use the Como Zoo and Conservatory to teach about animals, plants and the environment. This knowledge will impact their students for many years to come.

For the first time, a joint education program flyer including all spring and summer 1995 programs for youth at Como Zoo, Como Conservatory and Crosby Nature Center was developed and distributed to most Saint Paul elementary school students, and placed at recreation centers, libraries and other youth-serving organizations. This approach was very successful - most of the classes and programs filled with waiting lists. Youth classes and day camps scheduled during spring break and summer were very successful with waiting lists and additional sessions added. The new "Full Moon Walk" programs at Crosby Park have been widely publicized and well attended.

The approach used in the past four years to reach inner city youth relied on education program flyers, sent home to Saint Paul elementary school children. This approach works well with middle class families, but does not work well with low income youth and families. The Como Conservatory's new Artist Residency Program addressed this problem by partnering with youth-serving organizations such as McDonough Recreation Center, Hmong American Partnership and Arts 'R Us. These organizations recruit and supervise the youth as well as transport them

to and from Como Conservatory. This approach is far more successful and will be direction Saint Paul Parks and Recreation's Como Environmental Unit will take to reach low income Saint Paul residents.

Written program evaluations were implemented in the past six months for all naturalist taught programs through Como and Crosby. School teachers received evaluation forms and some informal education programs participants were given an evaluation comment card to return. Thirty-two evaluations were returned by Saint Paul school teachers, all rating the overall program as excellent. Some comments related to the need for pre-visit background materials and information. We need to work on the informal education program process: we have learned that we need to mail the card to the families or parents of the child, with a comment card to return in the mail.

Currently, a Five Year Education Plan is being developed for both Como and Crosby Environmental programs, including an analysis of "what is", "what should be", and "recommendations"; a needs/mission statement, goals and objectives, strategies, organizational structure and a budget.

An intensive effort is being made in 1995 to generate revenue to continue Environmental Education programs through Como Conservatory, Como Zoo and Crosby Nature Center. Five grants have been submitted in 1995 to continue Environmental Education programs at Como Conservatory, Como Zoo and throughout the City of Saint Paul: two were funded. As of June 30, 1995, three additional grants are being written, two for Como Conservatory and one for Crosby Park and Nature Center. Other revenue generating actively being pursued are Day Camps, Birthday Parties and a Fall 1995 Education Program for adults at Como Conservatory. In addition, a Pot Sale and a Music Series were conducted by Como Conservatory volunteers and staff to benefit the Conservatory Education program.

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, through its general budget, is funding three Como Environmental Education positions in 1995: the 1.0 FTE Education Coordinator, .5 FTE Volunteer Coordinator and .25 Office Administrative Assistant. In 1996, the Education Coordinator is funded at .9 FTE, with a .5 - 1.0 FTE Volunteer Coordinator.

Como Conservatory’s Artist-in-Residence is funded in 1995 through General Mills Foundation, MRAC, contributions from the Conservatory’s support group, and revenue from class fees and fund raisers. An effort is being made to find funds for 1996, as the program is expanding rapidly.

At present, no funds are available to continue the current level of naturalist programs beyond August 31, 1995. The two naturalist’s salaries and benefits have been partially subsidized in 1994 and 1995 through the City of Saint Paul’s general funds. At this point, the short term plan is to hire naturalists on specialist contracts. Funding will be generated through fees for service, grants and our own revenue generating efforts.

- A.6. Benefits: Because many inner city families lack the transportation capabilities to reach areas of Minnesota not served by public transportation; the nature programs that will be given at these three inner city facilities will give inner city residents an opportunity to gain an appreciation of the natural environment that they would not be able to attain otherwise.
- B. Continue to develop an Environmental Education curriculum suitable for Saint Paul elementary schools.
- B.1. Narrative: Naturalists will work with school teachers in Saint Paul schools, both public and private, to develop nature classes which will meet or exceed the State of Minnesota’s Environmental Education requirements for elementary school children. (An intensive effort will be made to supplement LCMR funding for the naturalist assistant from other funding sources, such as grants, metro park funds, general budget, etc.)
- B.2. Procedures: A naturalist will continue to meet with teachers to develop programs that meet the needs of the State of Minnesota’s Environmental Education requirements for elementary students. This will include formulating written programs and creating interpretive exhibits, including displays, live animals and craft projects. These programs will either be taught in the classroom by the naturalists; or field trips to Crosby Nature Park, Como Zoo or Como Conservatory will be arranged, depending upon the subject matter, time of year, etc. A new introductory brochure, describing the programs that are available will be developed for distribution to elementary schools in Saint Paul.

B.3. Budget:

- a. Amount budgeted: \$45,000
- b. Balance 7/1/95: \$0

B.4.	<u>Timeline for Products/Tasks:</u>	July 1, 93	Jan 94	June 94	Jan 95	June 95
	Begin development of programs	.....			
	Conduct environmental curriculum classes	.....			
	Meet with teachers and evaluate/modify programs as necessary		.....		
	Final evaluation and review of programs with teachers					.....

B.5. Status:

Throughout the two year period, approximately 40 different programs were developed by the naturalists. Some of this curriculum has been written up formally. A formal written evaluation process for these programs was done in 1995. Thirty-two teachers responded, all ranking the overall program held in their classroom or on location at Como or Crosby as excellent. Some would like more pre-visit information or activity sheets.

The Eisenhower grant teacher’s workshop, "Using Como Zoo and Conservatory To Promote Inquiry Teaching" was completed on June 30, 1995. This workshop inspired curriculum development at the Como Zoo and Conservatory, by staff, volunteers and school teachers. This workshop also gave Saint Paul Parks and Recreation staff the opportunity to talk directly to teachers regarding their education and customer service needs at Como Zoo and Como Conservatory.

A grant was written in 1995 to receive funds to develop "Rain Forest" curriculum for Saint Paul third grade classes. Although this particular grant was not funded, we now have a vision of how curriculum at Como Zoo and Conservatory should be developed, using the animal and plant collections to provide learners the opportunity to understand the interdependence among humans, animals, plants and habitat. An interdisciplinary approach will be taken, including the humanities, natural and social sciences and the cultural arts. Diversity, both natural and human will be studied. Curriculum will be developed that engages all the senses and learning styles.

This approach recognizes the human diversity of the City of Saint Paul, where currently 53% of Saint Paul Public School students are minorities and fully 27% are Southeast Asian. Our Five Year Education Plan will incorporate this vision with goals, objectives and strategies.

- B.6. Benefits: This program is orientated towards the Saint Paul schools, which have a high minority enrollment, many of whom are Southeast Asians. This program will help introduce Southeast Asians to Minnesota land stewardship values. A written curriculum will help teachers prepare for and follow up their student's visits to the nature program. Because all three facilities that will be utilized for this program are located within Saint Paul, this will reduce the travel time and cost for the schools.

V. Evaluation:

Overall evaluation will be determined by the total number of participants utilizing these nature programs and if this is an increase or decrease from expectations. Surveys which will be given to program participants and personal contacts will be used to determine individual participants level of satisfaction with the program. Teachers participating in the educational curriculum will be given an evaluation and any program changes necessary will be made as needed on an ongoing basis. In addition, parents of children participating in the programs will be given a program evaluation so that their comments and suggestions can be incorporated into the program.

VI. Context:

- A. At the present time, except for Crosby Farm Nature Park, all of the nature parks in the metro region are located in suburban areas. Many inner city residents have not had the opportunity to experience nature in a manner many Minnesotan's take for granted. This is mainly due to the fact that while Minnesota has many areas in which to enjoy nature, most of these areas are outside the metropolitan area, and many inner city families lack the transportation facilities which would enable them to take advantage of these opportunities. While elementary students have had some exposure to nature through the environmental education curriculum offered in the school system, this has not helped the inner city residents who are not in the elementary school system. This enlarged nature program, comprising of Como Zoo, Como Conservatory and Crosby Nature Park will give these residents an opportunity to participate in a nature experience not before available to them.
- B. Not applicable.

- C. A summer nature interpretive program was begun at Crosby Farm Park in August 1988 by a student intern. A grant was received in 1989 that enabled the city to continue the nature program through 1989, this grant expired in March 1990. In July 1992, a grant was received from the LCMR; this enabled the program, for the first time, to be able to be put on a full increase in the number of program participants. The proposed LCMR grant will enable the present program to continue, and to be enlarged to include the facilities at Como Zoo and Como Conservatory, in addition to Crosby Nature Park. An increase in staff as well as additional facilities will enable this program to reach even more people than it does now.

VII. Qualifications:

1. Program Manager:

July 1993 through October 30, 1994: Ed Olsen - Manager of Environmental and Natural Resources within the Saint Paul Division of Parks and Recreation Environmental Services Section. He supervised the nature educational program for the Division, and supervises environmental and natural resource issues associated with Saint Paul park land and open spaces.

October 31, 1994 through present: Ruth Schumi - Education Coordinator, Como Environmental Education, a new unit within the Saint Paul Division of Parks and Recreation, Environmental Services Section. She supervises the education staff and volunteers at Como Conservatory, Como Zoo and Crosby Nature Center.

VIII. Reporting Requirements:

Semiannual status reports will be submitted not later than January 1, 1994, July 1, 1994, January 1, 1995 and a final status report by June 30, 1995.