

## ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS IN MINNEAPOLIS SCHOOLS

13(d) \$100,000, FRF

Kathy Kinzig

Eco Education

275 E Fourth St., #821

St. Paul, MN 55101

Phone: (651)222-7691

Fax: (651)222-3425

E-mail: [ecoed@minn.net](mailto:ecoed@minn.net)

Web Address: <http://www.blacktop.com/ecoeducation>

As a result of this appropriation, teachers, students, and administrators at Minneapolis schools partnered with Eco Education to carry out environmental service learning projects in the schools' neighborhoods.

The project included the following aspects:

1. Eco Education workshops trained 57 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers in methods of environmental service learning, issue investigation, community outreach, and the Urban Stewards process. Training also involved grant proposal preparation, initial evaluation, and a final evaluation of project results and possible improvements.
2. Eco Education staff visited classrooms as needed to facilitate development and execution of service learning projects and to help teachers make connections to their curriculum.
3. Participating student groups, with their teachers, submitted minigrant proposals to fund service learning projects that were designed and carried out by students.
4. Students grant distributions totaled over \$17,000 over two years. A few project examples are: restoring native vegetation around Lake Nakomis, creating maps and signs for visitors to Battle Creek Regional Park, and designing an outdoor classroom on school grounds.
5. Eco Education published two versions of a manual for integrating environmental service learning and distributed it to schools in Minneapolis and St. Paul with 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades. It was also made available to other urban school districts in Minnesota. The manual outlines how environmental service learning can meet outcomes in the GreenPrint for Minnesota, and the graduation standards.

This project resulted in educating 1,475 middle school students over two years. Project completed by June 30, 2000.

Date of Report: June 30, 2000

**JUN 23 2000**

Date of Next Status Report: FINAL

Date of Work Program Approval: October 8, 1997

Project Completion Date: June 30, 2000

LCMR Work Program

I. PROJECT TITLE: I 15, Environmental Service Learning Projects in Minneapolis Schools

Project Manager: Kathy Kinzig  
Affiliation: Eco Education  
Mailing Address: 275 E. Fourth Street, #821, St. Paul, MN 55101  
Telephone Number: 651-222-7691  
E-Mail: ecoed@minn.net  
Fax: 612-222-3425  
Web Page Address: www.blacktop.com/ecoeducation

Total Biennial Project Budget:

SLCMR:	\$100,000.00	\$ Match:	\$71,995.00
- \$LCMR Amount Spent:	\$100,000	- \$Match Spent:	\$71,994.00
= \$LCMR Balance:	\$0	= \$Match Balance:	\$0

A. Legal citation: ML 1997, Chap. 216, Sec. [15], Subd. 13D

Appropriation Language:

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS IN MINNEAPOLIS SCHOOLS

This appropriation is from the future resources fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Eco Education to provide training and minigrants for student service learning projects. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2000, at which time the project must be completed and final products delivered, unless an earlier date is specified in the work program.

B. Status of Match Requirement:

Rathmann Family Foundation	10,000	Thorpe Foundation	3,000
Pinewood Trust	18,122	Wallace Dayton	10,000
Baker Foundation	5,000	Bemis Co. Foundation	3,000
Polaris Foundation	2,000	<u>Carolyn Foundation</u>	<u>25,000</u>
Grotto Foundation	10,000	<u>Total</u>	<u>86,122</u>

II. PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS:

From September, 1997, to June, 1999, teachers, students and administrators at up to 20 Minneapolis schools (10 each year with the potential for the first year partner schools to participate the second year) will partner with Eco Education to carry out environmental service learning projects in their neighborhoods. This will result in educating between 1,500-2,400 students over two years.

• Eco Education workshops will train between 50 and 80 5th-8th grade teachers. Up to 20 administrators will be invited to attend the training. Initial workshops will cover the methods of environmental service learning and the goals of this partnership project. Mid-year workshops will focus on grant proposal preparation and initial evaluation. Final workshops will discuss project results and reflect on what aspects of the program could be improved.

- Eco Education staff will visit classrooms as needed to facilitate development and execution of service learning projects and to help teachers make connections to their curriculum. Due to constraints on administrator's time to attend the workshop, Eco Education staff, participating teachers and students will devise a system to communicate frequently with administrators at each school to inform them of the progress of their projects.
- Participating student groups, with their teachers, will submit minigrant proposals for up to \$2,000 to fund service learning projects that are designed and carried out by themselves. Minigrant funds are limited, therefore participating teachers will be encouraged to collaborate with other teachers to submit their classes' or group's project for funding. Because some classes will incur expenses while doing their issues investigations (i.e. collecting information through a field trip, classroom speaker, photocopying and mailing a written survey) but before they have written a minigrant, up to \$200 per class will be allotted for investigation-type expenses to be approved in advance by Eco Education staff. If these funds are not used, they can roll over into money available through the mini-grant. If, by the end of the grant period, April 30<sup>th</sup> of 1999, funds have not been disbursed for use in minigrants or investigations, the funds will be used to provide a further resource to teachers in the program. Eco Education learned as a result of this model that students and teachers lacked initial knowledge of environmental issues in their communities and that an added knowledge component to the process would benefit students. This resource, called City Connections, is a curriculum guide that introduces community environmental issues in Minneapolis /St. Paul, basic skills for addressing them, and guidance to carry out a community project. It will be provided to teachers who wish to continue with the program and future Urban Stewards program participants.
- Student grant proposals will be reviewed in two different ways. The H.Y.P.E. council, a team of students who evaluate student written grant proposals for the tax levy funds distributed for service learning to the Minneapolis Schools, will review and select students' grants when the council is available. The grant proposals that H.Y.P.E is not available for reviewing will be reviewed by Eco Education. Funds available for these grants total up to \$30,000 over two years.
- Eco Education will publish a manual for integrating environmental service learning and distribute it to all Minneapolis schools and make it available to other school districts in Minnesota. The manual, featuring service learning projects completed during this grant, will outline how environmental service learning can meet outcomes in the Green Print for Minnesota, the graduation rule, and outcomes specific to the Minneapolis schools.

### III. PROGRESS SUMMARY:

#### **Urban Stewards Teacher Manual (Result 4 in the workplan)**

A manual for service learning was developed, piloted by teachers, and reviewed by professionals in the field through the first two years of the project. This last year of the project was spent compiling the feedback and on-going research in the components of service learning. In addition, the experiences of two years of projects that students and teachers carried out in the Minneapolis public schools were available to use as examples and highlights throughout the manual. The manual was edited, professionally laid out, printed and disseminated.

Much of the feedback given prompted us to create three pieces of the manual to better meet the needs of teachers and other educators throughout the state.

*Introduction and Quick Reference to the Urban Stewards Manual:* This 15 page booklet gives a brief overview of the program and the process including goals, program steps, project successes, introduction to service-learning, a timeline, community partnerships and graduation standards. This was created at the suggestion of teachers for a quick outline and reminder of the process without the in-depth detail. This booklet is also used as a way to introduce the program to educators unfamiliar with Eco Education and/or Urban Stewards.

*Urban Stewards Teacher Manual:* This is a bound manual with over 130 pages of detailed information and step by step instructions of all the components listed in the Quick Reference. In addition, it is specifically geared for teachers who are working with Eco Education and who will have access to funds for minigrants. A section is included about Eco Education's grant guidelines with copies of the grant application. Noted throughout the manual are the places that Eco Education can give direct support to the teachers and classrooms involved in the program. It also provides an extensive list of local community resources and contact information for the Twin Cities area.

*Urban Stewards Teacher Manual: Public Addition:* This manual was created for dissemination to educators across the state of Minnesota who would not directly receive support or funds from Eco Education or be involved in the Urban Stewards program (the program currently only serves Minneapolis and St. Paul schools). The chapter about minigrants that Eco Education provides is replaced with a chapter on where and how students and teachers can access funds from local, state and national organizations and other sources. This manual is designed to guide teachers who are interested in embarking on an environmental education service-learning project with their students without the additional support of Eco Education staff.

A letter with a copy of the Quick Reference was sent out to school administrators in the seven county metro area and all major cities throughout the state that targeted schools with 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. The full manual was made available for free to those who contacted us in return. Eco Education distributed the manual to interested participants attending a presentation by Urban Stewards students at a national interpretation association conference in Duluth. Eco Education will continue to disseminate the manual for free at conferences, training events and through our web site.

#### IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

- Result 1: 50-80 5th-8th grade teachers will be trained by October of each year through 4 one or two day workshops in the methods of environmental service learning and the goals of this project. The goal is to involve 2-4 teachers and 1 administrator from each partner school to establish a support network within the school for this type of learning. If this expectation proves to be unrealistic, we may have to adjust the total number of teachers that this project will train. Partner schools will be chosen in September the first year. The second year, Eco Education will start recruitment in the spring. A second recruitment in the fall can be conducted if needed. Schools will be chosen by selecting from a pool of applicants that responded to a flyer inviting all Minneapolis public schools that teach students in grades 5-8 to participate. Teachers will receive stipends to attend the workshop. In January of each school year, teachers will attend a workshop to evaluate their progress in integrating curricular goals and prepare to work with students on their grant proposals. In June of each school year, a one-day workshop will be held for all participating teachers to discuss their project results and reflect on what aspects of the program could be improved. Workshops will be facilitated by Eco Education staff and outside trainers.

LCMR Budget:	\$9,123	Balance:	\$0
Match:	\$11,412	Match Balance:	\$-122
Completion Date: Half of the workshops will be completed by July 1998 and half by July, 1999.			

- Result 2: Up to \$30,000 in minigrants of no more than \$2,000 each will be disbursed to student groups wishing to carry out environmental service learning projects during the grant period. Minigrant proposals written by participating student groups will be submitted and reviewed by Eco Education and the H.Y.P.E. council, a team of students who evaluate grant proposals for the tax levy funds distributed for service learning to the Minneapolis Schools. The grants will be funded by Eco Education and checks will be made out to the school and given to the participating teacher. Funds may be used to purchase items needed to carry out projects, such as compost bins, paint, garden tools, etc. Funds may also be used prior to the minigrant proposal on pre-approved expenses incurred for student investigations (i.e. collecting information through a field trip, classroom speaker or copying and mailing out a survey). Funds will not be used to compensate students or teachers for their efforts. If, by the end of the grant period, April 30<sup>th</sup> of 1999, funds have not been disbursed for use in minigrants or investigations, the funds will be used to provide a further resource to teachers in the program. Eco Education learned as a result of this model that students and teachers lacked initial knowledge of environmental issues in their communities and that an added knowledge component to the process would benefit students. This resource, called City Connections, is a curriculum guide that introduces community environmental issues in Minneapolis /St. Paul, basic skills for addressing them, and guidance in carrying out a community project. It will be provided to teachers who wish to continue with the program and future Urban Stewards program participants.

LCMR Budget:	\$17,932	Balance:	\$0
Match:	\$0	Match Balance:	\$0
Completion Date: Half of the funds distributed by March, 1998 and half by March, 1999.			

- Result 3: Eco Education staff will provide classroom visits as needed to facilitate activities and provide on-going consultation with teachers to help tie out of classroom experiences to curriculum goals and coordinate all aspects of this project.

LCMR Budget:	\$62,653	Balance:	\$0
Match:	\$42,522	Match Balance:	\$262
Completion Date: July, 1999			

- Result 4: A manual for integrating environmental service learning will be published and distributed to all Minneapolis schools and be made available for purchase to other school districts in the state. Teachers, project partners (Hedy Walls, Ken Jeddelloh and other district partners from the Minneapolis Public Schools) and Eco Education staff will work together to create the manual. The manual, featuring service learning projects completed during this grant, will outline how environmental service learning can be used to meet outcomes in the Green Print for Minnesota, the graduation rule, and outcomes specific to the Minneapolis schools.

LCMR Budget:	\$10,292	Balance:	\$0
Match:	\$3,808	Match Balance:	\$0
Completion Date: June, 2000			

- Result 5: An assessment tool will be developed by Eco Education and outside assessment experts. The tool will provide information about the effectiveness of the service learning program.

LCMR Budget:	\$0	Balance:	\$0
Match:	\$3,505	Match Balance:	\$0

- Result 6: This service learning program will be promoted by our tri-yearly newsletter, The Eco Educator (distribution 800). Information about the program will also appear on our Internet website and will be presented at conferences throughout the year and at our annual banquet in May.

LCMR Budget:	\$0	Balance:	\$0
Match:	\$10,947	Match Balance:	\$-140

#### V. Dissemination:

As mentioned in result 4, a manual for integrating environmental service learning will be published and distributed to all Minneapolis public middle schools (or schools containing grades 5-8), all participants of the program, and be made available to other school districts in the state by request through our web site and a flyer sent out at the end of the 1998/99 school year.

As mentioned in result 6, The Eco Educator, Eco Education's tri-yearly newsletter will also disseminate information about the service learning program. It will be sent to approximately 800 educators, donors, and others associated with Eco Education.

#### VI. CONTEXT:

##### A. Significance:

In the Green Print, teachers are encouraged to help kids develop stewardship for the environment by participating in "positive actions with the environment" (p. 13, outcome #3) Implementing environmental service learning projects can accomplish this, but no mechanisms or models exist to show how environmental service learning projects help address district standards or graduation rule requirements. This void gives environmental service learning projects "add-on" status and leaves the burden of proving educational credibility of the activity in the hands of already overwhelmed teachers. By helping teachers integrate the methodology of environmental service learning, this project helps meet the five major Green Print learner outcomes listed on p. 13. It also meets 5 of the 10 program implementation actions suggested on pages 16 and 17.

Environmental service learning is a powerful teaching tool that puts students in the driver seat of protecting and enhancing their environment. The problem solving, critical thinking and citizenship skills developed by young

people in the process make it an attractive way to satisfy learner outcomes recommended in the Green Print, the district and the state graduation rule.

To fit the definition of service learning, projects must be initiated and lead by young people with teachers and other adults as facilitators who work to connect the out of classroom experiences to the curriculum. Although more school groups are beginning to embark on community projects with an environmental theme, a lack of educator training and support from administrators lead to few examples that fit this definition. To date, no coordinated efforts have addressed the development and implementation of environmental service learning. Organizations such as Eco Education and the National Youth Leadership Council (located in Roseville) have worked to advance the practice in schools through teacher training workshops, but without a coordinated approach involving teachers, school administrators and district and community education specialists, success has been marginal.

Several school districts, including Minneapolis, channel their community education/youth development tax levy funds into minigrants for school groups to carry out service learning projects. Most teachers in these districts, however, do not have the skills to facilitate true service learning projects, which integrate into their curriculum. Furthermore, few of the projects address environmental concerns.

This project enhances the existing situation on three levels. On one level it provides the training and minigrants needed for teachers to facilitate environmental service learning projects and integrate them into their curriculum to help satisfy Green Print recommendations. These teachers will be able to continue to complete environmental service learning projects each year through access to the service learning minigrant funds provided by the state tax levy. On a second level, it brings district curriculum and community education specialists together to develop a common language about how to integrate environmental service learning into school curriculum to help address learner outcomes in the Green Print and the graduation rule standards. On a third level, it provides a model to guide other districts in Minnesota in implementing this valuable process.

**B. Time:**

This project will be completed by August 31, 1999.

**C. Budget Context:**

	July '95-June '97 Prior Expenditures on this project	July '97-June '99 Proposed expenditures on this project	July '99-June 2001 Anticipated future expenditures on this project
1. LCMR	0	\$100,000	0
2. Other State*	0	0	\$10,000
3. Non State			
Cash	0	\$71,995	0
Total	0	\$171,995	0

\* Through the community education/youth development tax levy funds, the Minneapolis Public Schools provide \$125,000 each year in minigrants for service learning projects. This annual source of state funding is independent of this project. It is anticipated that by demonstrating the value of environmental service learning, more teachers and students will access the minigrants for this purpose in future years.

**BUDGET:**

Personnel*	\$50,900
Equipment	0
Acquisition	0
Development	0
Other	\$49,100

**(Sub Categories:)**

Minigrants	\$30,000
Teacher Training	\$12,050
Manual Publication	\$7,050
Sub-Total:	\$49,100

Total: \$100,000

\* The personnel compensated through this grant, except for independent contractors needed to publish the teacher manual, will be Eco Education staff. Total staff time for the project equals 1.8 FTE: 1.45 project coordinators, one financial coordinator at 5% time, one outreach/development coordinator at 15% time, and the executive director at 15% time.

#### VII. COOPERATION

- Ken Jeddeloh, Science Coordinator, Department of Teacher and Instructional Services, Minneapolis Public Schools (3% time, no costs are associated)
- Hedy Walls, Community Education Specialist, Department of Family and Community Education Services, Minneapolis Public Schools (3% time, no costs are associated)

#### VII. LOCATION:

Eco Education is working with ten Minneapolis schools. A map showing the location of all Minneapolis public schools is included as Attachment A and B. Last years partner schools are circled in yellow. Current partner schools for the Urban Stewards program are circled in orange.

#### IX. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Periodic work program progress reports will be submitted no later than January 15th, 1998, July 15th, 1998 and January 15th, 1999. A final work program report and associated products will be submitted by August 31, 1999, or by the completion date as set in the appropriation.