

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2014 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 062-B**

Minnesota River Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality

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**Category:** B. Water Resources

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**Total Project Budget:** \$ 85,100

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 2 Years, July 2014 - June 2016

**Summary:**

The Minnesota River Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality is a stormwater pollution abatement project designed to address excess nutrient pollution in the form of phosphorus and nitrogen in the Minnesota River Watershed.

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**Name:** Scott Sparlin

**Sponsoring Organization:** Friends of the Minnesota Valley

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**Location**

**Region:** Metro, Southwest, Southeast

**County Name:** Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Carver, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Dakota, Douglas, Faribault, Freeborn, Grant, Hennepin, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, McLeod, Murray, Nicollet, Otter Tail, Pipestone, Pope, Ramsey, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Sibley, Scott, Stearns, Steele, Stevens, Swift, Traverse, Wagoner, Watonwan, Yellow

**City / Township:**

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_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ Employment	_____ TOTAL _____%



**I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

The Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality™ (CCWQ) began ten years ago as a project designed to address excess nutrient pollution in the form of phosphorus and nitrogen within the Minnesota River Watershed. The project received a Governor’s Award for Excellence in Pollution Prevention in 2009. Friends of the Minnesota Valley and our partners have conducted 410 Clean-Ups with the help of 12,670 volunteers, removing over 31,300 pounds each of phosphorus and nitrogen pollution within the Minnesota River Watershed. Last October, as part of their “Centennial Day of Service”, 26,000 Girl Scouts in Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin removed over 20,000 pounds of pollution in the tri-state area. Through the CCWQ, we are improving the water quality of the Minnesota River, enhancing aquatic habitat for native fish. This, in turn, will help them better compete with invasive species such as Asian carp.

The CCWQ project was developed with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and other partners to respond to non-point municipal stormwater pollution as a factor in the degradation of the water quality of the Minnesota River, one of the most impaired rivers in the country. Excess nutrient pollution in the Minnesota River also collaterally and negatively impacts water quality within the Mississippi River Watershed, accelerating the filling in of Lake Pepin and expanding the Dead Zone in the Gulf of Mexico. The CCWQ project educates and mobilizes civic organizations, youth groups, school groups, city staff, and watershed citizen volunteers to rake, sweep, bag, weigh and compost nutrient-laden organic debris such as grass clippings, leaves, and sediment from boulevards and public areas before it enters the municipal stormwater system and pollutes the Minnesota River. The CCWQ are complementary to municipal street sweeping and take place in the spring and fall when spikes in nutrient pollution occur. We also insert individual clean-up response forms in area newspapers, increasing results by 30%. Volunteers track and report results to us, which we in turn report to the MPCA. The MPCA applies the pollution reduction results to and tracks the progress of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed Dissolved Oxygen Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). We developed a formula with the MPCA to quantify results: five 20-lb. bags of organic debris contain approximately 1 pound each of phosphorus and nitrogen, which produces up to 1,000 pounds of oxygen-depleting algae. We are working with the MPCA, U of M scientists, and cities such as Mankato and New Ulm to refine research on variation in nutrient amounts due to the proportion of sediment, grass clippings, and leaves in organic debris. Our project serves the eleven-county Lower Minnesota River Watershed and the 37-county Minnesota River Watershed, home to a population of over 500,000 people. During the two-year grant period, we will engage a minimum of 30 communities in the CCWQ project, host 30 open houses, mobilize a minimum of 1,800 volunteers, and remove a minimum of 10,000 pounds of nutrient pollution. With the help of Chambers of Commerce, we will also recruit members of the business community. For the first time, we will sponsor a contest for “Community Clean-Ups Community of the Year”, including a modest cash prize for the winner.

**II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

**Activity #1: Project Recruitment and Training**

**Budget: \$ 38,300**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Prepare and distribute sponsor and volunteer recruitment mailing (800 pieces)	August 2014/2015, January 2015/2016
Conduct follow-up communication with potential Clean-Up sponsors	September 2014/2015, February 2015/2016
Conduct ten (10) watershed training sessions/ year	September 2014/2015, February 2015/2016



**Activity #2: Project Implementation**

**Budget: \$ 29,780**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Procure Clean-Up equipment and supplies	October 2014/2015, April 2015/2016
Conduct Clean-Up promotion and advance work	October 2014/2015, April 2015/2016
Conduct a minimum of 30 Clean-Ups	October 2014/2015, April 2015/2016
Prepare and distribute individual response forms	October 2014/2015, April 2015/2016

**Activity #3: Project Evaluation and Communication**

**Budget: \$ 17,020**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Update interactive clean-ups website	October 2014/2015, April 2015/2016
Evaluate and report results to MPCA, public media	December 2014/2015, May 2015/2016

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

Primary project partners include Friends of the Minnesota Valley (FMV), the Minnesota River Board (MRB), and The Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River (CCMR). FMV’s Executive Director, Lori Nelson, is responsible for overall project administration and oversight; FMV’s Watershed Initiative Coordinator and the CCMR’s Executive Director, Scott Sparlin, is the project manager and is responsible for partner contacts, soliciting support, overseeing training activities and event organizing, and providing inter-partner coordination. FMV will hire a student intern on stipend as CCWQ Project Coordinator to assist Sparlin. MRB’s Executive Director, Dr. Shannon Fisher, is responsible for providing secondary support to Sparlin on organizing training sessions within the Minnesota River Basin. FMV is the only grantee receiving LCCMR funds.

**B. Timeline Requirements**

The CCWQ are perennial and seasonal, conducted in the fall and spring when they are most effective. There are three program components, each with its own timeline (please see Section II). The project is going into its tenth year of operation and, if funded by LCCMR, we anticipate that additional future funding will be needed to both sustain and expand the project [please see Section III(C), *infra*, for more information].

**C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs**

The CCWQ is part of an ongoing effort within the Minnesota River Watershed. We anticipate that it will be a perennial program with repeat participation by watershed communities. The CCWQ program was developed as a model to be replicated in other watersheds and was initially funded with seed money from the Archibald Bush Foundation. Since the program’s inception, FMV has been able to significantly expand our network of over 40 partners and donors, including foundations, corporations, and individuals. Our current donor list includes Xcel Energy, the Carolyn Foundation, Uponor Corporation, Rahr Malting, the RBC Blue Water Project, REI, the Bloomington Community Foundation, Bloomington Noon Rotary, and the Minnesota River Board.

**2014 FMV Revised Detailed Project Budget:  
Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality™**

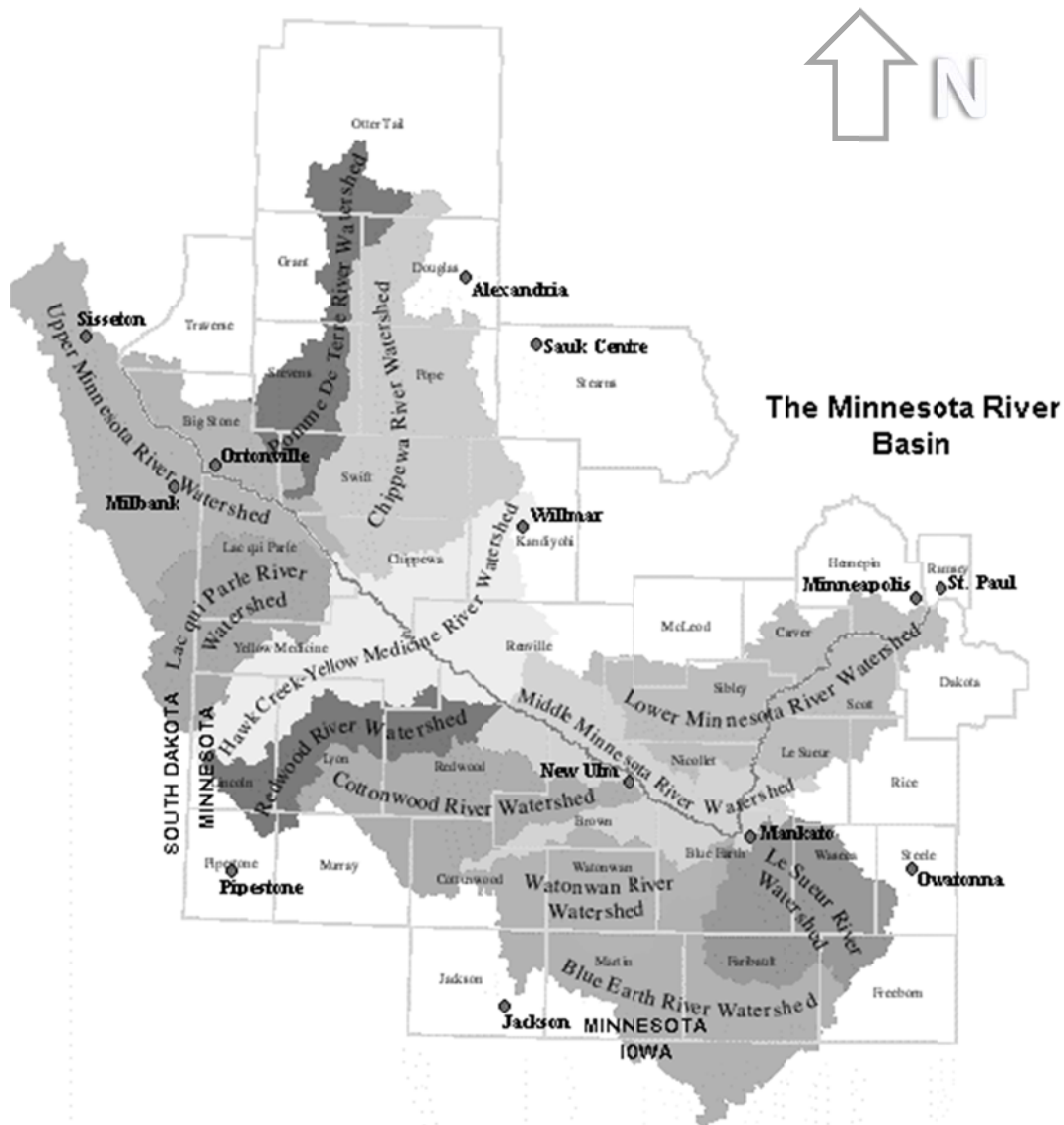
**Proposal #062-B, Minnesota River CCWQ, Project Manager Sparlin**

**IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET : Two (2) years**

<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
<b>Personnel:</b> Friends of the Minnesota Valley (FMV), CCWQ Coordinator (1 new FTE/ on stipend): 1 person, July 2014-June 2016, salary/stipend-100%, benefits-0% (\$24,000)	\$24,000
<b>Contracts:</b> Scott Sparlin, FMV Watershed Initiative Coordinator, for services rendered pursuant to the grant as project manager, including making partner contacts, soliciting support, overseeing training and event organizing, and providing inter-partner coordination.	\$18,000
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> CCWQ Supplies:	
Rakes (for collection of organic debris during CCWQ project/event)	\$1,000
Gloves (for collection of organic debris)	\$300
Compostable or large lawn and leaf bags (for collection of organic debris)	\$5,000
Post-CCWQ food and beverages (for CCWQ volunteer participants: \$100/ event)	\$6,000
<b>Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):</b>	N/A
<b>Travel:</b> Mileage (for 6 training events-calculated at current IRS rate)	\$1,000
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b>	
Printing of training materials, including CCWQ Community Toolkit (training/ 30 communities: \$100/ community/ over 2 years)	\$6,000
Printing and insertion of individual CCWQ response forms (20 communities each year)	\$22,600
Sponsorship recruitment mailings (1200 pieces to 30 communities over 2 years)	\$1,200
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =</b>	<b>\$85,100</b>

**V. OTHER FUNDS**

<b>SOURCE OF FUNDS</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b> EPA 319 DER Grant (\$133,300);	\$133,000	<i>Pending</i>
Xcel Energy (\$30,000); Rahr Malting (\$6,000); Minnesota River Board (\$3,000); Bloomington Community Foundation (\$2,000); Bloomington Noon Rotary (\$2,000); Uponor Corporation (\$2,000)	\$45,000	<i>Secured</i>
<b>Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period:</b> In-kind professional and volunteer services-- Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River (\$10,800); City of Arlington (\$26,000); City of Le Sueur (\$22,000); City of New Ulm (\$30,000); City of Mankato (\$30,000); Friends of the Minnesota Valley (\$10,000); CCWQ volunteer hours (1,800 volunteers/ 4 hours each at \$10/hr.) (\$7,200); Minnesota River Board (\$5,000)	\$141,000	<i>Secured</i>
<b>Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable)</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>Funding History:</b> Cash funding from non-state CCWQ partners from 2007 to present: EPA 319 DER Grant (\$110,000); Archibald Bush Foundation (\$75,000); McKnight Foundation (\$103,300); Xcel Energy (\$65,000); RBC Blue Water Project (\$10,000); Bloomington Community Foundation (\$5,000); Carolyn Foundation (\$10,000), Bloomington Noon Rotary (\$11,000); REI (\$5,000) Uponor Corporation (\$3,000); Minnesota River Board (\$3,000), Rahr Malting (\$3,000), Eden Prairie Community Foundation (\$1,000)	\$ 404,300	



**PROJECT MANAGER QUALIFICATIONS  
AND ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION:  
COMMUNITY CLEAN-UPS FOR WATER QUALITY™**

**Project Manager Qualifications:**

**SCOTT EMERSON SPARLIN, *WATERSHED INITIATIVE COORDINATOR***

Scott Sparlin became the Friends' Watershed Initiative Coordinator in July 2002. Scott has been the Executive Director of the Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River for the past 24 years and he has a long history of advocating sound water quality management policies throughout the Minnesota River Basin. As Project Manager, Scott Sparlin will be responsible for partner contacts, soliciting support, overseeing training activities, as well as event organizing and providing inter-partner coordination.

Scott brings a wealth of experience in fundraising, community engagement and organizing, public education and outreach, and policy development to the position. As one of the creators of the Community Clean Ups for Water Quality™ (CCWQ), Scott has an intimate understanding of how local citizen-driven projects are successfully implemented. He has personally led Community Clean Up for Water Quality events in communities, planning and implementing each step while assessing the project process for evaluation which is used to make improvements to subsequent projects. Scott has also held training sessions for interested groups explaining to citizens how they can become engaged in local projects.

Scott has also served on numerous committees with a water quality focus. Scott served on the original Citizens Advisory Committee for the Minnesota River as well as the Minnesota River Turbidity Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), Minnesota River Phosphorus TMDL and the State Storm Water Advisory Committee. He coordinates the largest river focus festival in the state called *Riverblast*, which attracts 5,000 people to the river at New Ulm each year to celebrate, appreciate and become aware of issues and solutions for the river. The event has been in existence for 13 years and prior to that for 6 years in a different format called the River Rally. Scott founded the New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen in 1986 and was its president until 2009. Scott has been recognized for his work with citizen and community engagement numerous times including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Meritorious Service Award, National Izaak Walton League Service Award, Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' Community Conservationist of the Year Award, Minnesota River Board Tributary Award, U.S. Department of the Interior Service Award, Clean Up the River Environment's Riverkeeper Award, Take Pride in America Award and two governor's commendations.

**Organizational Description:**

Friends of the Minnesota Valley is the only nongovernmental organization dedicated solely to the conservation and enhancement of natural resources within the Lower Minnesota River Watershed, including the 14,000-acre Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Founded in 1982, the Friends have 1,800 members. Some of the Friends' accomplishments include the establishment of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, serving as a leader in the successful effort to enroll over 100,000 acres of formerly-cropped land in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program in the Minnesota River Basin, playing a lead role in the establishment of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, and preventing the construction of a 19,250-seat outdoor amphitheater next to the Refuge's most ecologically-sensitive land unit. The Friends are a multi-year past partner in the LCCMR-funded Metropolitan Conservation Corridors Habitat Restoration Project.