

Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources

## **2010 Project Abstract**

For the Period Ending June 15, 2011

PROJECT TITLE: Project GO Toolkit Activities

PROJECT MANAGER: Sara Grover

AFFILIATION: Project Get Outdoors, Inc.

MAILING ADDRESS: Whitewater State Park, 19041 Highway 74

CITY/STATE/ZIP: Altura, MN 55910

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WEBSITE: [www.mnprojectgetoutdoors.org](http://www.mnprojectgetoutdoors.org)

FUNDING SOURCE: MN Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

LEGAL CITATION: ML 2010, Chap.[ 362 ], Sec.[ 2 ], Subd. 8h.

APPROPRATION AMOUNT: \$15,000

### Overall Project Outcomes and Results

Project GO has developed a toolkit to help local communities design, implement, evaluate and sustain free after-school and summer programs that introduce children to nearby public lands and outdoor activities and skills they can enjoy at these sites.

Through funds from the MNENRTF, Project GO was able to assemble 50 Activity Backpacks and 32 Equipment Trunks for Project GO program leaders to use in their communities. Each program leader is issued a backpack to keep during their involvement with the Project GO program. The Activity Backpacks provide basic supplies to help leaders implement 100 or more different outdoor games, projects and activities.

The Equipment Trunks focus on 16 different activities and are available for Project GO leaders to check out for free. These trunks are housed at Whitewater State Park for use in SE Minnesota and we anticipate the other set of 16 trunks will be housed out of Minneopa State Park for use by Project GO clubs in SW Minnesota.

At the time of this report, 14 backpacks have been issued. Equipment trunks are beginning to be checked out. Program leaders are excited to have these resources and so far, feedback has been very positive. The children are happy to have more diverse equipment and supplies to use while learning about the outdoors. We plan to evaluate the usefulness of these resources over the coming year via a program leader survey. One obstacle we are looking at is getting the equipment trunks to and from program sites that are farther from the storage site. We are hoping to develop a network of volunteer "runners" who would be reimbursed mileage for delivering and returning the equipment trunks when a GO site in a community such as Red Wing or Spring Grove desires to check out a trunk.

### Project Results Use and Dissemination

The completed Activity Backpacks have already been issued to 14 sites. We will continue to help communities design Project GO programs that are unique as well as work with local staff at community organizations such as youth centers, school age child care programs, and other after school sites to introduce children in those programs to nature through our toolkit resources.

Since completing the assembly of the 50 Activity Backpacks and 32 Equipment Trunks, Project GO has formed a partnership with local public health and child care resource professionals to look at implementing our program into the larger child care centers that serve school age children during the after school hours. We are currently piloting this at a child care center in Caledonia and looking to work with two child care centers in Rochester. We will train the school age room staff at these centers to use our backpacks at least once a week. As an incentive for them to use the backpacks and journal their experiences, Project GO will provide a person to come out to their site no more than once a month to lead a hands-on nature activity using one of the Equipment Trunks. This new approach with child care centers will allow us to serve many more children. Project GO will be presenting at an upcoming Focus on the Child conference in Rochester, sharing this information with child care providers from across the southern region.

A number of colleges and college professors in Se Minnesota have expressed enthusiasm to connect their students to service learning, internship and practicum experiences with Project GO. We have found that college students bring great enthusiasm to the program which the children really enjoy and in exchange Project GO is able to provide real world learning experiences for these students.

We are already looking to secure additional funds to purchase more backpacks, as we anticipate the first 50 will be issued within a year. The US Fish & Wildlife Service Winona District is eager to help us acquire another batch of backpacks.

# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) 2010 Work Program Final Report

**Date of Report:** November 16, 2010  
Final Report

## **I. PROJECT TITLE:** Project Get Outdoors Toolkit Activities

**Project Manager:** Sara Grover  
**Affiliation:** Project Get Outdoors Coordinator and Board Member  
**Mailing Address:** Whitewater State Park, 19041 Hwy 74  
**City / State / Zip:** Altura, MN 55910  
**Telephone Number:** 507-932-3007 ext. 226 cell 507-951-5885  
**E-mail Address:** sara.grover@yahoo.com  
**FAX Number:** 507-932-5938  
**Web Site Address:** www.mnprojectgetoutdoors.org

**Location:** Southern Minnesota, including the counties of *Goodhue, Wabasha, Winona, Houston, Fillmore, Olmsted, Dodge, Mower, Steele, Freeborn, Rise, Waseca, Faribault, Blue Earth, LeSueur, Sibley, Nicollet, Brown, Watonwan, Martin, Jackson, Cottonwood, Redwod, Renville, Lac Que Parle, Yellow Medicine, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Rock, Pipestone, and Lincoln.*

<b>Total ENRTF Project Budget:</b>	<b>ENRTF Appropriation</b>	<b>\$ 15,000.00</b>
	<b>Minus Amount Spent:</b>	<b>\$ 14,874.95</b>
	<b>Equal Balance:</b>	<b>\$ 125.05</b>

**Legal Citation:** ML 2010, Chap.[ 362 ], Sec.[ 2 ], Subd. 8h .

**Appropriation Language:** \$15,000 is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Project Get Outdoors, Inc. to develop out of school programs connecting children to local nature experiences.

## **II. and III. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY**

Project GO has developed a toolkit to help local communities design, implement, evaluate and sustain free after-school and summer programs that introduce children to nearby public lands and outdoor activities and skills they can enjoy at these sites.

Through funds from the MNENRTF, Project GO was able to assemble 50 Activity Backpacks and 32 Equipment Trunks for Project GO program leaders to use in their communities. Each program leader is issued a backpack to keep during their involvement with the Project GO program. The Activity Backpacks provide basic supplies to help leaders implement 100 or more different outdoor games, projects and activities.

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in SE Minnesota and we anticipate the other set of 16 trunks will be housed out of Minneopa State Park for use by Project GO clubs in SW Minnesota.

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#### IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

##### RESULT 1: Accessible & Practical Activity Planning Resources

**Description:** The resources available through the Start Up Backpacks, Activity Ideas Booklet, and Equipment Trunks will facilitate Project GO program start up and activity planning for a minimum of 50 communities located in Southern Minnesota, serving a minimum of 5000 registered participants and implementing a minimum of 1500 separate outdoor nature activities, fieldtrips and/or service projects.

**Summary Budget Information for Result 1:**

<b>ENRTF Budget:</b>	<b>\$ 15,000.00</b>
<b>Amount Spent:</b>	<b>\$ 14,874.95</b>
<b>Balance:</b>	<b>\$ 125.05</b>

Deliverable	Completion Date	Budget
1. As of November 12, 2010 we have been able to purchase 100% of the needed supplies for the toolkit backpacks. All 50 backpacks have been assembled and 14 of them have already been issued to Project GO program leaders in Se Minnesota.	November 16, 2010	\$9,130.60
2. . We were able to stretch out the \$15,000 award and therefore purchase enough equipment to assemble 2 sets of 16 different equipment trunks (32 trunks total). These trunks include: Animal Calling, Animal Tracking, Bird Watching, Campfire Cooking, Fish Printing, Geo-caching, Insect Collecting, Intro to Camping, Knot Tying, Make A Walking Stick, Recycled Rhythm Makers & Nature Sing Along, Make A Nature Journal, Make A Dragonfly, Make A Kite, Make A Pet Rock, and Outdoor Olympics.	November 26, 2010	\$5,869.40
3.		

*(add or remove rows to Deliverable table as needed)*

**Final Report Summary:** November 16, 2010

**V. TOTAL ENRTF PROJECT BUDGET:**

**Personnel:** \$

**Contracts:** \$

**Equipment/Tools/Supplies:** \$ 14,874.95 for 50 Activity Backpacks and 32 Equipment Trunks.

**Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):** \$

**Travel:** \$

**Additional Budget Items:** \$

**TOTAL ENRTF PROJECT BUDGET: \$14,874.95**

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$3,500:** Equipment trunks will be used for the same purpose for their lifetime, shared for free among the Project GO groups in region. This \$15,000 investment by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund will continue to aide local communities in their outdoor education efforts for years.

**VI. PROJECT STRATEGY:**

**A. Project Partners:**

The Project GO Board of Directors will be overseeing the project. The Board is composed of individuals who represent various agencies and organizations that share an interest in connecting kids to the outdoors. Members include; Maria Lamey – Wabasha County Social Services, Tony DeBusk – Boys Scouts of America, Julie Fassbender – City of Winona Park and Rec, Larry Gates – Farmer & retired DNR Watershed Coordinator, Sara Grover – MN State Parks, Jon Holger – Fillmore County Social Services & MN State Parks, Patrick Jirik – U of MN Extension Service, Kate O’Grady – MN State Parks & WSU Assistant Professor, Andrea Lorek Strauss – U of MN Extension Service, Dave Palmquist – MN State Parks, Ann Rethlefsen – Winona State University, Ellen Rollie – St. Charles Public Schools, Cindy Samples – US Fish & Wildlife Service (board liaison). Sara Grover serves as the lead project manager and will be assisted by the board and their partner agencies.

**B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:**

Project GO is helping Minnesota communities to implement free after school programs that get kids outdoors and engaged in nature. The 50 toolkits funded through this grant will be issued for free to 50 interested communities throughout the entire southern region. Like 4-H Clubs or Scout Troops, the Regional Project GO Coordinators will work with interested communities to train community volunteers how to start up and sustain their own unique programs. These Project GO programs will continue to operate in each community long after the completion of this grant period. Over the coming years, Project GO will continue to work with communities and partnering

organizations to secure more funding in order to assemble additional toolkits and expand the program reach throughout the entire state of Minnesota.

We plan to continue to partner with government and non-government agencies that share in our mission and to identify ways that partnering organizations can help contribute funds or other resources to aide in this effort.

Project GO received 501c3 tax-exempt status in February 2009. Since then, our Board of Directors has begun to move forward on developing a sustainable funding strategy. Prior to this, we operated under the fiscal sponsorship of the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota.

### **C. Other Funds Proposed to be Spent during the Project Period:**

The backpacks were donated by the US Fish & Wildlife Service with a few basic supplies in them, valued at \$75/piece. The Sheltering Arms Foundation has awarded Project GO a \$10,000 grant to assist with the expansion of the program into 50 communities providing start up funds to each new site and dollars for website re-design. The North Face Planet Explore has also recently awarded \$2,500 to assist in this project. Also, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Trails has created an 80% Interpretive Naturalist/Project GO Coordinator position at Whitewater State Park to help with the effort in Se Minnesota. The DNR is currently looking at creating a similar position for Minneopa State Park to help with Project GO outreach in SW Minnesota. This in-kind support provided by the MN DNR is valued at over \$50,000.

**D. Spending History:** Project GO has spent \$9,130.60 to gather the supplies for all 50 of the toolkit backpacks. Equipment Trunk Costs totaled \$5,869.40.

### **VII. DISSEMINATION:**

The completed Activity Backpacks have already been issued to 14 sites. We will continue to help communities design Project GO programs that are unique as well as work with local staff at community organizations such as youth centers, school age child care programs, and other after school sites to introduce children in those programs to nature through our toolkit resources.

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**VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: A final work program report and associated products is being submitted November 16, 2010.**

**IX. RESEARCH PROJECTS:**

**Attachment A: Budget Detail for 2010 Projects - Summary and a Budget page for each partner (if applicable)**

<b>Project Title: Project Get Outdoors Toolkit Activities</b>					
<b>Project Manager Name: Sara Grover</b>					
<b>Trust Fund Appropriation: \$ 15,000</b>					
<b>2010 Trust Fund Budget</b>	<b><u>Result 1 Budget:</u></b>	<b>Amount Spent</b> <i>(date)</i>	<b>Balance</b> <i>(date)</i>	<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>TOTAL BALANCE</b>
	<i>Accessible &amp; Practical Activity Planning Resources</i>				
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>					
<b>Non-capital Equipment / Tools:</b> - 50 Start Up Backpacks with basic supplies (blindfolds, magnifying glasses, rope, bug boxes, trail cards, animal calls, clipboards, balls, etc.) - Equipment Trunks with resources for Project GO clubs to experience a greater variety of outdoor recreation activities (binoculars, fishing poles, GPS units, digital cameras, tents, aquatic nets, art supplies,	\$15,000.00	\$14,874.95	\$125.05	\$15,000.00	\$125.05
<b>Other</b> <i>(Describe the activity and cost) be specific</i>					
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$15,000.00</b>	<b>\$14,874.95</b>	<b>\$125.05</b>	<b>\$15,000.00</b>	<b>\$125.05</b>