

2013-2015 Wisconsin Environmental Education Board Biennial Budget Request

1. What are the requests?

A. A \$15,000 increase to WEEB general **operating funds** which is administered through the board of regents University of Wisconsin system under section 20.285 (1)(a) of the statutes as outlined in 1997 Wisconsin Act 27 which transferred the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board from the Department of Public Instruction to UW-System.

B. An additional .5 FTE on appropriation 20.285 (1)(a) for the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board allowable by state statute 230.08(2)(rm) to **oversee the forestry and school forest portions** of the environmental education grant program as outlined in state statute 36.54(2)(b) and 20.285(1)(rc).

C. Re-establish a \$200,000 GPR appropriation to be used to award **general environmental education grants** as outlined in state statute 36.54(2)(b) and to reestablish 20.285 (1)(ee) which was eliminated in 2001 Wisconsin Act 16.

2. Background and Justification for requests

A. A \$15,000 increase to WEEB general operating budget

The WEEB has not had a general operating budget increase since it was created in 1990. Obviously service and supply costs (transportation, meals, printing, telephone, mailing, etc.) have risen significantly since then.

The legislated membership of the WEEB has increased by more than 20% (from 14 to 17 members) since the Board's inception. Added sector representation includes:

- 1992- Nature center/museum/zoo representative
- 2002- Energy representative
- 2002- Forestry representative

In addition to its original responsibilities the WEEB now administers a \$200,000 SEG fee appropriation that supports a forestry education grant program (\$190,000) and provides administrative support (\$10,000). However, the \$10,000 service and supply budget is not sufficient to meet associated expenses. Administrative expenses for private foundations (Table 1.) tend to be higher (0.56% to 1.02% for comparable asset classes) than WEEB's allocation of 0.52%.

Table 1: Private Foundation Median Charitable Administrative Expenses as a Percent of Assets, by Asset Size: 3 Studies

		Association of Small Foundations ¹	Council on Foundations ²	Donors Forum of Chicago ³
	All	0.47%	0.77%	0.74%
total foundation assets	< \$1 M	0.56%	1.02% ⁵	0.62% ⁵
	\$1-4.9 M	0.42%		
	\$5-9.9 M	0.51%	0.91%	0.49%
	\$10-24.9 M	0.50%	0.87%	0.81%
	\$25-49.9 M	0.48%	0.79%	0.82%
	\$50-99.9 M	0.48% ⁴	0.74%	0.71%
	\$100-249.9 M		0.68%	0.64% ⁶
	\$250-499.9 M		0.74%	
	\$500 M +		0.68%	

¹ 2006-2007 Foundation Operations and Management Survey, Association of Small Foundations, 2006.

² Foundation Management Series, 12th Edition, Council on Foundations, 2006.

³ Interpreting Form 990-PF: Looking Beyond Foundation Administrative Expenses, Donors Forum of Chicago, 2004.

Source: Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers (2007): A Closer Look at Foundation Administrative Expenses Benchmarking & Reporting Expenses Amid Growing Public Scrutiny. Retrieved August 2012 from: <http://www.grantmakers.org/gfny/documents/adminexpenses.pdf>

Over the years, the WEEB has instituted various cost reduction measures including:

- Compressing the grant selection process from a two day format to a one day session saving lodging and meal costs
- Utilizing phone conferencing and webinars rather than face-to-face meetings
- Primarily holding meetings in Stevens Point and Madison in order to reduce mileage reimbursement costs to Board members
- Significantly reducing the number of grant application packets printed annually. Applicants are encouraged to download materials from the WEEB website. (WEEB is now printing only 100 application booklets (50 general and 50 forestry) per year which are predominantly used by grant reviewers and board members).
- Mailing postcards rather than letters whenever possible

If approved the additional \$15,000 would bring the WEEB's total service and supply budget to \$30,000.

B. An additional 0.5 FTE to support the work of the WEEB

When the Board was created in 1990, a 0.5 FTE position was assigned to facilitate the work of the Board (refer to 20.255 (1) (cm) and 115.375 (1)). In 1997 the Board was transferred from the Department of Public Instruction to the University of Wisconsin System. In addition to the original functions, the Board is now also responsible for administering a forestry education and school forest education grant program. When these programs were initiated the legislature did not provide for a corresponding increase in staff time. As each of these programs has grown, the demands on staff time have also increased.

The 0.5 FTE staff person is now responsible for administering 3 state appropriations (Table 2) and also a revenue account into which private fund-raising donations are deposited.

Table 2. Highlights regarding increasing fiscal responsibilities

	1997	2012 (all grant categories)
Number of WEEB financial accounts	1 GPR account (salary and supplies)	3 state accounts: GPR (salary and supplies), SEG assessment SEG forestry, 1 private fund raising account
Budget staff responsible for	\$236,000	~\$435,000

The 0.5 FTE staff person is responsible for administering more than 3 times as many grant recipient contracts (Table 3) as were administered in 1990.

Table 3. Highlights regarding increasing # of contracts to manage

	1990	1997	2012 (all grant categories)
Number of grant recipients current cycle	27	26	49
Number grant recipients previous cycle	-	20	40
Total number of active grant recipient files	27	46	89

In order to manage more contracts with the same staff resources, the WEEB is no longer requiring interim reports from grant project directors; only final reports. While no longer a requirement, many institutions continue to submit interim reports, which then must be processed. Typically the institution’s cash balance does not enable them to wait for reimbursement until the project is completed; that is why they have sought grant funding in the first place.

While State statute 36.54 (2)(f) indicates, “The environmental education board may use up to 5% of the amount appropriated under s. 20.285 (1)(rc) to administer the grants under this subsection that are related to forestry.” These segregated revenue dollars (\$10,000 as noted above) are budgeted on supplies and expenses and may not be used toward salary and fringe benefit expenditures.

C. Re-establish a \$200,000 GPR Appropriation to be awarded as General EE grants

The Wisconsin Environmental Education Board's general environmental education grant program provides critical support for achieving the goal of environmental literacy for all.

"Environmental education is a lifelong learning process that leads to an informed and involved citizenry having the creative problem-solving skills, scientific and social literacy, ethical awareness and sensitivity for the relationship between humans and the environment, and commitment to engage in responsible individual and cooperative actions. By these actions, environmentally literate citizens will help ensure an ecologically and economically sustainable environment."

The WEEB general environmental education grant programming has financed a well-managed portfolio of educational resources that:

- Respond to emerging needs of Wisconsin's citizens, businesses and communities, thus building stronger communities. Recent topics include:
 - Invasive Species Awareness programs,
 - Citizen-science based monitoring programs,
 - Educating town officials and road crews about the effects of correct and incorrect installation of road culverts.
- Strengthen the capacity of K-12 students to meet environmental education model academic achievement standards. Examples include:
 - Establishment of Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Environmental Education;
 - creation and implementation of Wisconsin Public Service Corporation's Solar Wise for Schools program in which photovoltaic equipment is installed on high schools and the curriculum is infused with energy concepts; and
 - significant investment in curriculum development and professional development of instructional staff.
- Help prepare post-secondary students by connecting higher education, technical education, and continuing professional development with innovation in environmental education and management. Examples include:
 - development and initial offering of the Master Woodland Stewards course;
 - integration of infrared digital technology into courses at UW-Milwaukee to incorporate a better understanding of thermal behavior of buildings concepts within the architectural education program; and
 - An Intensive Multinational Inquiry-based Training Course for K-12 Teachers provided by the Global Environmental Teaching program at UW-Stevens Point.
- Provide private and public leaders and the general public with reliable resources for self-directed environmental learning when at work or play. Examples include:
 - mammal trunks, whooping crane curricula, and the Parks Pack program.
- Greatly enlarge the reach of outdoor studies to urban residents, the disabled, and others whose daily lives do not include regular exposure to nature's systems, flora and fauna. Examples include:
 - creation of the Department of Natural Resources' EEK! website which in 2011 had 1,004,740 visits; 4,300,048 page views; and 827, 883 unique visitors;
 - environmental education outreach to Southeast Asian students provided by UW-Stevens Point; and development of a substantial number of urban rain gardens and

the corresponding curricula through UW-Extension and UW-Madison Arboretum programming).

Demand for these competitive grant dollars continuously outstrips the available resource.

With the 2001-2003 biennial budget the legislature eliminated a \$200,000 GPR annual appropriation (20.285 (1) (ee)) to the WEEB and replaced it with an equivalent appropriation (20.285(1) (rc)) in segregated fees from the forestry account of the conservation fund. Based on conversations with legislators, it is the WEEB's belief the legislature did not intend to cut or alter the WEEB general grant programming; but rather was just looking for an alternative appropriation source. The forestry account segregated fee money can *only* be used to support *forestry* education grant proposals. In addition with the 2011-2013 biennial budget, the legislature eliminated a \$200,000 segregated fee appropriation (20.285(1) (rc)) from the forestry account of the conservation fund.

The impacts of the alterations include:

1. Beginning with the 2002-2003 grant program cycle the WEEB only had an estimated \$30,000 per year (20.285(1)(r)) to award statewide for general environmental education grants. In reality the amount of the assessment (20.285(1)(r)) has been more than the estimated \$30,000 (see Table 4, next page). Last year the amount was approximately \$140,000. This year the amount available will be approximately \$65,000. These dramatic swings make it difficult for the WEEB and for grant applicants to consistently implement projects that address the goals identified within *Wisconsin Plan for Environmentally Literate and Sustainable Communities* and *Wisconsin's Plan to Advance Environmental Literacy and Sustainability in PK-12 Schools*.
 - The Board reduced the maximum award per proposal for general environmental education grant requests from the historic \$20,000 per proposal to \$5,000 per proposal. When the assessment appropriation increased, the maximum award per proposal was increased to \$10,000 per proposal (its current level).
 - The scope of general environmental education grant proposals was altered significantly. Project directors can not complete the same type of project when the maximum award is \$5,000 or \$10,000 that they were able to undertake when the maximum award was \$20,000.
 - Initially the request level (number of proposals submitted) for the general environmental education grant category dropped, but for the past five years, the number of proposals submitted within the general category has approximated or exceeded the pre-budget alteration levels. This despite the Board advertising a significant reduction in the amount of funds available. Obviously the need for these funds remains.

Year	Amount Requested	# Requests	Amount Funded*	# Funded	Amount Advertised as Available	Amount of Funds Available through GPR 20.285(1)(ee)	Amount of Funds Available through 5% surcharge on environmental fines (also referred to as EE assessment account) 20.285(1)(r)
2013-2014					\$65,000	0	\$65,068.46
2012-2013	\$360,003	57	\$165,075	27	\$140,000	0	\$142,686.15
2011-2012	\$375,033	64	\$88,904	17	\$70,000	0	\$69,238.87
2010-2011	\$453,268	76	\$129,617	27	\$115,000	0	\$114,567.70
2009-2010	\$292,497	62	\$97,649	22	\$85,000	0	\$85,678
2008-2009	\$213,084	55	\$68,030	23	\$45,000	0	xxx-new UW account system-comes in same year as awarded rather than one year lag
2007-2008	\$272,804	72	\$158,972	39	\$150,000	0	\$45,106.80
2006-2007	\$173,339	49	\$104,661	26	\$50,000	0	\$134,999.35
2005-2006	\$200,062	55	\$98,357	30	\$50,000	0	\$96,392.59
2004-2003	\$189,064	54	\$113,655	31	\$50,000	0	\$70,385.83
2003-2004	\$103,827	28	\$57,498	17	\$50,000	0	\$56,779
2002-2003	\$286,634	29	\$110,631	12	Initially \$200,00 then altered to \$30,000	0	\$75,031.31
2001-2002	\$747,518	58	\$274,376	21	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$51,514.98
2000-2001	\$659,281	47	\$228,273	16	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$63,534.81
1999-2000	\$757,456	56	\$271,805	22	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$42,127.56
1998-1999	\$696,944	75	\$204,767	28	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$67,242.71
1997-1998	Info not available	Info not available	\$214,630	23	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$33,739.90
1996-1997	Info not available	Info not available	\$179,427	18	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$17,802.73

* Amount awarded beyond the value of the 5% surcharge on environmental fines (also known as the assessment funds) and in the early years of the table the GPR funds available indicates the value of private donations and/or the re-awarding of grant dollars that were not fully utilized by a prior grant recipient.

The WEEB works diligently to promote environmental education in all segments of society. Yet, it is nearly impossible to achieve the mission the legislature has identified with a general environmental education grant award budget that swings wildly and for the past 17 years has averaged \$72,465. When the assessment dollars were added to the WEEB's budget they were intended to supplement the dollars available for the WEEB general environmental education grant program not supplant it. Not having a regular, predictable base budget for the general environmental education grant program causes the award amount from year to year to fluctuate widely which in turn impacts the number and quality of the proposals received in future grant solicitations. It is imperative that a reliable, *predictable* and sufficient funding base for the general EE grant program be re-established if the goal of environmental literacy for all Wisconsin citizens is to be achieved.

3. Implementation Plan

- The current WEEB employee will be offered the opportunity to move from part time to full-time as soon as the increase in FTE is assured. The WEEB anticipates this will occur with the passage of the 2013-2015 budget.
- Announcement of the amount of dollars available for funding is included within the general grant application materials. The total amount identified will be increased by \$200,000 as soon as the appropriation is made by the legislature. The WEEB anticipates the increase will begin with the 2014-2015 cohort using funds appropriated in the 2013-2014 budget year.

4. What are the outcomes?

When we imagine Wisconsin's future, we picture a rich culture of environmental stewardship that sustains diverse natural resources, healthy communities and a thriving economy. The Wisconsin legislature has recognized that getting there requires financial investment. With a renewed investment commitment to the WEEB in 2013-2015 so much more can be accomplished.

The WEEB's *Wisconsin Plan for Environmentally Literate and Sustainable Communities* identifies six goals.

Goal I. Communicating the Value of EE

Build awareness of environmental literacy and sustainable communities.

Goal II. Education

Promote access to information and educational experiences needed to support environmental literacy and sustainable communities at work, school, home, and play.

Goal III. Community Resources

Build the capacity of individuals, organizations, businesses, and governments to advance environmental literacy and sustainable communities.

Goal IV. Research

Promote research and identify strategies to advance environmental literacy and sustainable communities.

Goal V. Assessment

Assess progress toward environmental literacy and sustainable communities.

Goal VI. Funding

Identify and share funding strategies and resources to advance environmental literacy and sustainable communities

Each goal has several identified outcomes associated with it. For more information see <http://www4.uwsp.edu/cnr/weeb/publications/strategic-plans/WisconsinPlan.pdf>

General environmental education grant funds would be awarded to projects that support one or more of these goals. Ultimately the objective is to promote environmental literacy across all age groups because environmental stewardship is not just one person or group's responsibility—everyone must play a part.

There are a variety of issues before the legislature for which WEEB general EE grant funds can be used to help educate Wisconsin citizens, including:

- groundwater, ballast water, and use of other water resources
- air quality issues including open burning,
- invasive species
- wetland mitigation
- mining
- energy use/renewable energy use
- feeding of wildlife
- chronic wasting disease
- recycling and sanitation programs

Indeed each of these issues has a myriad of sub-issues which need to be considered in order to move forward. An educated citizenry that is both knowledgeable and willing to take action can be a tremendous asset in resolving issues. Failing to educate the general population about these issues, their consequences, and alternate viewpoints regarding how to resolve the issue could in itself lead to unfortunate short and long term consequences for all the sectors (economic, political, social, and ecological) of society.

The additional staff time and administrative budget will allow for an expanded staff role in the oversight of work completed by volunteers serving on committees (education, leadership, and research) in order to keep the groups on task and moving forward. Staff time will also be devoted to improving grant project reporting requirements, investigating the possibility of moving to a completely electronic application process, and providing more timely response to citizen inquires.

5. Budget detail

	FY 13-14	FY 14-15
General operating increase	\$15,000	\$15,000
0.5 FTE	Salary: \$22,500 Fringe: \$10,125	Salary: \$22,500 Fringe: \$10,125
GPR EE grant program	\$200,000	\$200,000

- *Anticipated Matches and Leveraging Opportunities*
 - State statute requires a minimum of a 25% match for all grant funds awarded. Thus the \$200,000 investment of state funds will result in at least a \$50,000 match.
 - Historically the match provided by grant recipients has been well beyond the minimum 25% required. For example the \$129,617 investment that was made on the 2010-2011 cohort of general EE grants recipients has a corresponding match commitment of \$115,457.
 - The WEEB created a private 501(c)(3) organization, the Wisconsin Environmental Education Foundation, to raise private funds to supplement WEEB programming. In 2011, the WEEF received:
 - approximately \$25,000 in commitments through the State Employee Combined Campaign.
 - \$25,000 for water education programming and
 - \$5,000 in undesignated contributions