

INSTITUTE ON THE  
**ENVIRONMENT**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
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**MINI GRANT PROJECT SUMMARY**

Please complete the project summary and return the completed form to April Snyder, Associate Administrator for the Institute on the Environment at [aprilsnyder@umn.edu](mailto:aprilsnyder@umn.edu). Paper copies will not be accepted. Please also attach any photos, publications, brochures, event agendas or other materials that were a result of the mini grant summary.

<b>Date of Report Submission:</b>	April 6, 2016
<b>Project PI &amp; Dept/School</b>	Beth Mercer-Taylor, Institute on the Environment
<b>Project Title</b>	Students for Sustainability 2014 Earth Day fair
<b>Grant Amount \$:</b>	\$2500

**Project Context & Purpose**

*Please include the original project purpose statement and revise for any changes that occurred in the project after the start date with a short explanation of the changes.*

The student organization Students for Sustainability has been awarded the opportunity to organize the University of Minnesota's Earth Day celebrations for 2014. Among other goals, Earth Day 2014 will be a forum for individuals and groups throughout the entire campus, including students, faculty, and staff, as well as organizations beyond the University of Minnesota campus to interact with the Institute on the Environment and reflect on accomplishments over the past year regarding sustainability. Anyone can apply through Students for Sustainability to participate in the event and present their environmental initiatives, research, and programs.

Beth Mercer-Taylor is our partner within the Institute on the Environment. As the Sustainability Education Coordinator, Beth will provide advice, resources, and a clear direction for the event. She will constantly challenge us to come up with the most innovative, practical ideas to make the event as successful as it can be. Students for Sustainability will be the primary organization leading the event, with responsibilities including logistics, community outreach, and an information center for anyone who wishes to be involved with Earth Day 2014. Students for Sustainability will be partnering with Eco-Conscious Campus, whose members will provide a supporting role by sharing individual strengths and resources.

Within Students for Sustainability, the officers alone represent seven different majors and four different colleges, from an Accounting and MIS (Management of Information Systems) major in the Carlson School of Management to Architecture majors in the College of Design. This event is intended to be an opportunity for individuals with unique and diverse backgrounds to come together around the common goal and interest in environmental sustainability.

On Tuesday April 22, 2014, hundreds of individuals from the University of Minnesota will gather together for Earth Day 2014 to reflect on environmental sustainability over the past year. The event will take place in the Coffman Great Hall provide access to a greater number of individuals. Lining the walls will be booths staffed by various environmental organizations - affiliated with the University of Minnesota as well as off-campus organizations. These booths will provide information regarding the organization, accomplishments to-date as well as plans for the future, and most importantly how to become involved. Keynote speakers will deliver short presentations to boost energy and direct the momentum toward environmental action. After the keynote speakers, time will be allotted to network and continue learning about organizations at their booths.

\*\*\* Event was held on Northrop Plaza and Northrop's Front Hall, not Coffman. Having the event visible and outside would provide us with more engagement. The weather was nice enough to hold the event outside.\*\*\*

The expected benefits of Earth Day 2014 include fostering strong relationships among individuals on campus and organizations in the community. Participants will be challenged to look forward and think about what can be done today to benefit the tomorrow. This event and its goals align with the goals of the IonE mini grants program because Earth Day 2014 is designed to increase collaboration between the Institute on the Environment, students, staff, and faculty at the University of Minnesota, as well as organizations in the greater community.

For this event, we are requesting \$2500 for the mini-grant. Students for Sustainability has meeting rooms reserved for the remainder of the academic year, therefore space is not needed. Students for Sustainability also has the administrative capacity required to successfully accomplish Earth Day 2014. Funds will be appropriated to the following categories:

Marketing and Advertising \$400

\*\*\*Marketing and Advertising \$89.00\*\*\*

**Item:** Posters in size large and small (100\*(12x18 and 8.5x11))

**Supplier:** Unknown

**Cost:** \$89.00

**Reason:** To advertise for the event

Food and Beverages \$600

\*\*\*Food and Beverages \$610.81\*\*\*

**Item:** Compostable supplies

**Supplier:** U Market

**Cost:**

- 4 packs of 10 oz compostable cups ( ECOEPBHC10WAPK) at \$4.09 per pack, with 50 cups per pack
- 1 CT compostable 6" round plates (ECOEP016) at \$49.18/ CT, 1000 count
- 2 packages of 100% recycled luncheon napkins ( GC27253) at \$3.47 per package of 500 napkin

**Reason:** To provide compostable silverware, plates, and cups so that our sustainability themed event could be truly sustainable

**Item:** Mini Bars and Bearthday Cake

**Supplier:** Common Roots Café for mini bars and Unknown supplier for cake.

**Cost:** \$323.33 for the bars and \$55.00 for the cake

**Reason:** To provide light refreshment and draw in passerbys.

**Item:** Recycling Bins

**Supplier:** Landcare

**Cost:** \$160

**Reason:**To ensure out event encouraged recycling and to prevent waste.

Space Rental - Coffman Great Hall \$700

\*\*\* Space Rental - Northrop Front Hall and Plaza \$275\*\*\*

**Reason:** Coffman Great Hall was booked for this date so we had to use Northrop as our backup.

Fee for band \$300

\*\*\* Fee for band \$800\*\*\*

**Item:** Music

**Supplier:** Local bands: DJ CFANS, Center Coast and Grand Dynasty

**Cost:** \$800

**Reason:**To attract visitors before and during the event, promote a fun and celebratory atmosphere, and support local artists. There was confusion over payment over the bands so the full amount may not appear in your records. Center Coast never sent an invoice so they were never paid. This would change the total amount on the grant.

Other expenses

(Table and chair rental, shipping and handling costs, and additional expenses that may arise)

\*\*\* No additional expenses are confirmed to have arisen\*\*\*

Total \$2500

\*\*\*Total \$1774.81\*\*\*

Earth Day 2014 will be a catalyst for change for the years to come. The event offers a unique opportunity to all individuals associated with the University of Minnesota and the surrounding community to collaborate, discuss, and become the face of change towards a sustainable campus and a sustainable community. Funding from the Institute on the Environment will greatly impact the success of the collaborative initiative, and throughout this event Students for Sustainability hopes to develop and strengthen a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship with the Institute on the Environment.

### **Work Completed**

*Please provide a summary of the work that was completed for the mini grant project.*

Work completed included but is not limited to:

- Organizing lists of materials required, budgets, and 45 possible organizations to contact
- Contacting 35 student clubs, local environmental NGOs, and University-affiliated organizations
- Reserving an outdoor and indoor venue for the event at Northrop
- Collaborating with the Recycling Center to ensure composting during the event
- Working with Recycling Center to provide block of recyclable materials to draw passerby's attention
- Collaborating with Minnesota Recycling Association to borrow a compost bin to draw passerby's attention and demonstrate an example way to compost at home
- Working with U Market to order and collect compostable materials
- Maintaining contact with the 14 organizations that responded and ended up tabling to keep track of what the final event would look like
- Reaching out to local co-ops and restaurants to acquire locally sourced foods
- Purchasing additional food, including 'Beareth'day cake
- Organizing rough ticket system to encourage people who ate food to visit tables
- Finding and hiring local bands for entertainment
- Reaching out to the Coca Cola sponsored Art of Recycling event to showcase recycled art inside Northrop; transporting aforesaid art pieces
- Creating, printing, and distributing posters specific to the event
- Advertising the event through multiple non-paper venues (emails, announcements, etc.)

Working with Northrop to ensure there would be tables for participating organizations and arranging those tables and other materials beforehand **Partnerships & Collaborations**

*Please provide a summary of the project personnel, partnerships and collaborations that worked directly on the project or were started as a direct result of the mini grant project.*

The event offers a unique opportunity to all individuals associated with the University of Minnesota and the surrounding community to collaborate, discuss, and become the face of change towards a sustainable campus and a sustainable community. Specifically, tabling groups from the surrounding community included:

- River Rangers
- MPIRG
- Community Power
- HERC - Environmental Justice
- Sierra Club
- Minneapolis Energy Options

Numerous campus groups joined these community groups to educate the general student body and each other on the multitude of opportunities on and off campus to get involved in making this area more sustainable. This ranged from sign up sheets for a political Sierra Club event to an informational demonstration on kinetic-powered clean energy (see Project Outcomes and Impacts for further details). Campus affiliated groups involved included the following:

- Active Energy Club
- Fossil Free Minnesota
- University Recycling Program
- Parking and Transportation Services
- Wellness Program

- Sustainability Studies Minor
- It All Adds Up
- Vocal U
- Marine Biology Club
- CHIC 3771

In addition to collaborating with the large and diverse body of NGOs above, Students for Sustainability were able to work with University Market and the Recycling Center to order compostable utensils and compost waste at the event. Thanks to this Earth Day event, the groups involved have continued to work together, stay in touch, and promote each other's events on their respective social media platforms. Furthermore, Students for Sustainability and the ESPM Student Association worked together the following year for another collaborative Earth Day. In addition, the Recycling Center and Students for Sustainability were able to continue collaboration the following year on promoting zero waste at the CECC building in St. Paul Campus and are currently working (with the student governing body) on increasing composting on campus.

Overall, funding from the Institute on the Environment greatly impacted the success of the collaborative initiative, and throughout this event Students for Sustainability developed and strengthened a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship with the Institute on the Environment, the ESA, and the Recycling Center .

#### **Project Outcomes & Impacts**

*Please provide a summary of the outcomes and /or impacts of the mini grant project including future plans for the project.*

The Earth Day event had a wide range of positive direct and indirect impacts, including but not limited to the following:

#### **1. It increased student body's awareness of environmental opportunities in the area**

The plethora of organizations tabling at the event were able to inform participating students on a number of important issues. Specifically,

- MPIRG informed attendees on how their organization works on social justice and environmental issues (as well as what those key words entail), handed out flyers for an upcoming rally, and explained major issues including HERC and Tar Sands
- Community Power brought postcards to sign as well as information on their 'powerful conversations' events. They also explained what Minneapolis Energy Options had accomplished in the past and was looking to accomplish in the future.
- HERC - Environmental Justice presented a poster (previously presented at a more formal research-themed event at IonE) on the HERC facility, the environmental justice issues surrounding it, their group's actions regarding it, and possible actions other students could take
- Fossil Free Minnesota shared information on why many students are calling for fossil fuel divestment. They also handed out patches and hosted a screening of Do the Math.
- Vocal U shared their experience as an acapella group and their goal of bringing students from diverse educational backgrounds together
- The Marine Biology Club presented a poster on recycling tips, facts on ocean conservation, and seafood Watch packets and stickers to help students make more sustainable seafood choices

when consuming fish products. They also sold \$1 wristbands (with 100% of the funds to be donated to nonprofit ocean conservation organizations).

- The CHIC 3771 educated students on the role modern farm workers have in society and the environment
- The Sierra Club explained their broader goals as well as ways to get involved in the local chapter. They also had sign up sheets to go to a rally later that same day
- The Active Energy Club demonstrated ways energy can be generated from renewable sources

Although keeping track of what actions students who attended took in response to learning about these organizations was not within our organizational capacity, we believe that this gathering inspired and educated the large number of students who attended.

Beth Mercer-Taylor estimated that between 200 and 300 students participated through interactions with tables and student organizations, with 200 or more other students walking through and stopping to listen to the band and survey the surroundings.

## **2. It increased the surrounding community's awareness of environmental opportunities in the area**

Although exact numbers were not gathered during the event, a variety of non-students were drawn by the music and crowd to inspect the tabling organizations. These included adults from the nearby area and a group of school children on a campus visit.

## **3. Networking opportunities between environmental groups**

As demonstrated in later collaboration between SforS, the ESPM Student Association, the Recycling Center, and the Institute on the Environment for Earth Day 2015, promoting composting, and generally promoting each other's events, this event gave people already involved in environmental initiatives an opportunity to expand their horizons and strengthen ties. Overall, Earth Day 2014 helped consolidate a profusion of groups with similar broad goals by uniting them in a one-day outreach event while helping create and solidify a network of passionate volunteers throughout the area.

## **4. Laid groundwork for future collaboration between the Recycling Center, Students for Sustainability, and the ESPM Student Association which was renewed the following Earth Day and throughout the following school year**

See final paragraph in "Partnerships and Collaborations"