



St. Croix Valley Foundation Proposal Narrative

Please answer these questions in your narrative.

Include any other pertinent information that you deem important.

Please limit your narrative to three pages total.

I. Organization Overview

Provide your mission statement and a brief history of your organization.

The mission of the Baldwin-Woodville Area School District is to create a safe, productive, and respectful learning environment that will meet the needs of all students to be lifelong learners. The District will provide the facilities and resources necessary for students to become successful and productive members of society.

The Baldwin-Woodville School District serves approximately 1,300 students. The goal is to partner with parents to create lifelong learners and productive members of the community. In 2010, the school district was blessed with 96 acres of woods and wetland from the Giezendanner Estate. A school forest was created and an outdoor/environmental education program established. The school forest is also available to the public for recreational purposes plus community education classes are held there.

II. Project Description

What is your project? Discuss the specific activities.

B-W's Giezendanner School Forest is used extensively by the elementary and middle school students; high school usage is growing. Community education classes and recreational opportunities are also offered there. The forest is open to the public from sunrise to sunset year round. It is a wonderful resource for the community and school system. In 2010 volunteers created a trail system; but a portion of it cannot be used year round because of the wetland area that runs through the center of the property. The goal of this project is to build a raised boardwalk across 150 feet of wetland. The proposed boardwalk utilizes swamp pans and framing and does not impede the natural drainage and protects the wetland. The boardwalk will allow hikers to the entire

perimeter trail year round, provide access to the north east corner of the property, allow students to examine the wetland safely and dryly, and protect the wetland by keeping people on the trail.

What is the plan and the timeline of the project?

The school forest committee has been researching a way to cross the wetland since the property was obtained. Protecting the wetland, frost and water pressure needed to be considered. United States Fish and Wildlife directed us to Horicon Marsh for boardwalk recommendations. After consulting with them, the committee decided to utilize swamp pans to support the boardwalk. They are easy to install and are not subject to frost heaving. The plan is to purchase 40 of them and the accompanying decking to build a solid boardwalk. If funding is obtained, construction begins on the boardwalk in the spring of 2018. Timing will be dependent on how wet a spring we have but the boardwalk will be completed by fall of 2018 and ready for usage by community and the school district.

What are the goals you hope to achieve?

The ultimate goal is to encourage the use of Giezendanner School Forest by the community at large and students for educational and recreational purposes. A boardwalk across the wetland helps to fulfill this goal by allowing access to the north east corner of the property, enables hikers to walk the two mile perimeter trail year round, and expands educational opportunities for students. A boardwalk also keeps people out of the wetland and protects it from traipsing feet.

Who is involved in this project (leadership/consultants/volunteer)? Why are their qualifications right for this project?

- Erin Railsback on staff at Horicon Marsh has shared her expertise in boardwalk construction and provided the school forest committee with options.
- Debby Walters (Baldwin-Woodville School Forest Coordinator) has researched and provided information to the school forest committee so that they could make a recommendation. She will also help organize volunteers for the construction of the boardwalk.
- Dan Donahue and Dane Rasmussen will head up the construction crew. Dan has been in the construction business his entire life and Dane has done a great deal of building for the school forest.
- Baldwin-Woodville Technical Education students will help with the construction.

III. Need, Impact, Evaluation

Why is this project needed?

Since 2010, students have not been able to access the north east corner of the property because of the wetland. Recreational users are limited to trails on the west side of the property because of the wetland. Winter is really the only time that the swampy area can be

crossed and even then you might get wet feet. The goal is to create a trail system that can be used year round by the school system and the public.

How many participants are involved in the project?

This project will affect approximately 1300 students and the larger community. Residents of the Baldwin-Woodville area use the trail system for hiking but the property is open to anyone from sunrise to sunset.

How will the participants and the larger community benefit from the project activities?

The creation of this boardwalk provides access to a wider range of trails for people to hike and to learn from. Time spent in nature and exercising improves mental and physical health; the more areas and opportunities available increase the likelihood that people will be out and about.

What methods will you use to determine whether you have met your project goals?

Many people comment on the eastern end of the property being too wet to walk through and ask about a boardwalk; these comments should change. Teachers track the activities and areas of the school forest that they use with students through an evaluation form, the evaluation forms should reflect increased usage of this area of the forest.