

Sample Letter of Inquiry

Note: This is a fictitious proposal. Neither the organization nor the staff members exist. Any similarity to actual persons or organizations is coincidental. However, the format is intended to demonstrate an effective method of submitting a proposal to a foundation for a human services activity.

Backwoods River Nature Center
100 River Ave.
Columbia, Ohio 43200

January 1, 2007

Ms. June Forester
Natural Resources Alliance
200 Lake Ave.
Columbia, Ohio 43200

Dear Ms. Forester:

The founding Board of the Backwoods River Nature Center is writing to inquire about your interest in supporting a new educational initiative of the Backwoods River Nature Center. This is a program initiative serving the students of the Columbia Public Schools. This will be a program that will provide instructional resources in middle school classrooms for a new natural science and environmental studies unit. The unit has been designed with the objective integrating math, science, reading and writing skills into a cross-functional and interdisciplinary approach. The unit is designed to provide students with the skills to meet 8 of 15 requirements of the ninth grade proficiency test in mathematics, 10 of 12 requirements of the ninth grade proficiency test, and to reinforce reading and writing skills that are required at this grade level.

The unit will also include presentations about the ecology of the Backwoods River Basin and the geologic and human history of the Basin. Students will visit the nature center once each grading period for field survey work. In school laboratory projects and demonstrations will include replicating natural processes of erosion, observing the impacts of reduced dissolved oxygen on aquatic plants, and the life cycles of insects native to the Basin. Math skills developed will include metric measurements and conversions, organizing data into tables and graphical analysis as well as computations of expected and actual results of lab exercises. Students will read the results of research into similar river basin ecologies. They will write two term papers, one at the midpoint of the year about their literature search, and one at the end of the year about their conclusions after completion of the laboratory work and mathematical analysis.

The mission of the Backwoods River Nature Center is to provide experience based learning about nature and the Backwoods River Basin. A secondary benefit of the Nature Center and its

management of the grounds is the protection of the stream and provision of passive recreation opportunities for the community.

The founding board is made up of business leaders and environmental professionals who have witnessed the toll of poor resource management resulting in flooding and loss of species diversity in the last century. The schools have approached us to assist them in creating an experiential curriculum that will help their students meet the requirements of the State mandated proficiency tests, particularly in the fields of science and mathematics. Thus this program was developed by a blue-ribbon panel of science and math teachers and park rangers at the Nature Center.

The community has responded enthusiastically to the project with volunteers, and donations of transportation for the students. In order to complete the launch of the project, we require funding for printing specialized curriculum materials and study guides and to acquire special laboratory equipment and supplies for the in school laboratory study. If invited to present a full proposal, the Nature Center will request \$ 140,000 to meet the cost of a one year program for an estimated 700 students.

We appreciate your consideration of our program and look forward to the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss this request and the work of the nature center. For more information please feel free to contact me, Jeff Skinner, at 555-386-8115. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeff Skinner, Executive Director
Backwoods River Nature Center