

## **2019 Project Abstract**

For the Period Ending June 30, 2023

**PROJECT TITLE:** Connecting Over 6,500 Students to the Boundary Waters

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Chris Knopf

**AFFILIATION:** Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

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**FUNDING SOURCE:** Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

**LEGAL CITATION:** M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 05b

**APPROPRIATION AMOUNT:** \$ 450,000

**AMOUNT SPENT:** \$449,178

**AMOUNT REMAINING:** \$822

### **Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results**

This project connected over 6,000 Minnesota students to the wildlife, ecology, and history of the Boundary Waters through online resources, and classroom visits, and provided opportunities for students to develop deep connections to the wilderness, leadership, and positive peer relationships through overnight wilderness trips.

### **Overall Project Outcome and Results**

Although approximately 200,000 people visit the Boundary Waters each year, many Minnesotans have never been to the Boundary Waters and may not appreciate its unique wildlife, ecology, culture, and history. This project aimed to connect students (grades 6-12) to the BWCA through classroom education and wilderness canoe experiences, targeting diverse and underserved students throughout Minnesota.

Through two components of this program, classroom visits and wilderness trips, over 8,000 program experiences to 6,324 students were provided – not including the over 30,000 students estimated to access our online materials.

Though COVID-19 prevented us from launching in-person programs until 2021, our online lessons allowed us to reach students across the state. These lessons are still used frequently in classrooms, both with schools as a precursor to a visit and on their own to teach about Boundary Waters ecology, history, and Anishinaabe culture. In 2021, in-person lessons began in schoolyards around Minnesota. Our evaluations of the programs show that these lessons were valuable in bringing a greater understanding of the Boundary Waters, encouraging students to spend more time outdoors, and offering opportunities for students to work together.

In our wilderness trip component, 210 students attended overnight trips, and 230 participants attended local paddle programs. Local programs served as a COVID-19 alternative until overnight trips began in 2022 and doubled participants in 2023. Our evaluations from chaperones on these wilderness trips highlight the personal growth and leadership they saw from students, and student evaluations highlight confidence and positive relationships during their overnight experience.

By building connections to the BWCA through classroom experiences across the state, and increasing student confidence, leadership, and positive peer relationships in overnight trips, this program serves to benefit

Minnesota by inspiring the next generation of wilderness stewards that reflect the many different communities of our state.

### **Project Results Use and Dissemination**

Our [updated website](#) provides information for teachers, including [online resources](#), a [course catalog](#), and information on [MN State Standards](#). We also created a [brochure](#) for use at events. Teachers are encouraged to sign up for the [Educator Network](#), which provides them with resources as well as newsletters throughout the year. Trip resources include ["how-to" videos](#).

Throughout the duration of the project, we invited local newspapers to cover our programs, and [several pieces](#) were published throughout Minnesota. We highlight our school visits and wilderness trip groups on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and created a [video](#) to share with teachers and the general public.



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2018 ENRTF Work Plan Final Report (Main Document)

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**Today's Date:** March 14, 2024

**Final Report**

**Date of Work Plan Approval:** June 5, 2019

**Project Completion Date:** June 30th, 2023 (with a final report by August 15th)

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**PROJECT TITLE:** Connecting Over 6,500 Students to the Boundary Waters

**Project Manager:** Chris Knopf

**Organization:** Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

**College/Department/Division:**

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**Location:** Statewide

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**Total Project Budget:** \$450,000

**Amount Spent:** \$449,178

**Balance:** \$822

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**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 05b

**Appropriation Language:** \$450,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness to connect approximately 6,500 students to the boundary waters through classroom education and wilderness canoe experiences for diverse and underserved populations across Minnesota. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2023, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

## **I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION & STATEMENT:**

### **Project Description:**

This project will connect over 6,500 students to the Boundary Waters through classroom education and wilderness canoe experiences, targeting diverse and underserved populations across Minnesota.

### **Project Statement:**

Arizona has the Grand Canyon. Wyoming has the Tetons. And Minnesota has the Boundary Waters.

Although approximately 200,000 people visit the Boundary Waters each year, many Minnesotans have never been to the Boundary Waters and do not have a full appreciation of its unique and complex wildlife, ecology, culture, and history. This project aims to change this situation by connecting over 6,500 students (grades 6-12) to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness through classroom education and wilderness canoe experiences, targeting diverse and underserved students throughout Minnesota. There are two components to this program:

- 1) Educational, classroom presentations about the wildlife, ecology, culture, and history of the Boundary Waters at schools across Minnesota, reaching at least 6,480 students over a three-year period.
- 2) Multi-day wilderness canoe experiences in the Boundary Waters for at least 250 students from across Minnesota over a three-year period, focusing on outdoor skills, leadership development, and self-reliance.

Providing educational and classroom outreach about the Boundary Waters and multi-day wilderness canoe experiences in the Boundary Waters will yield multiple lasting benefits for the youth participants, for the Boundary Waters, and for the state of Minnesota. This project will increase students' understanding of the Boundary Waters, while also developing leadership skills, self-reliance, and positive relationships. An important part of the long-term protection of the Boundary Waters is fostering the next generation of wilderness paddlers and explorers. The deep connections that students will develop with the Boundary Waters will lead to sustained awareness and care of wilderness areas. Minnesota benefits from its youth developing leadership skills, self-reliance, and an enhanced stewardship ethic.

## **II. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:**

### **First Update June 1, 2020**

Since the start of this position in January, the No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters program has made progress in school programs, wilderness trips, strategic partnerships, and outreach. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, many of our plans for this year had to be postponed, as schools closed and guiding organizations canceled their summer programming. While these cancellations have made it difficult for us to encounter students in the way we had hoped, it has provided an opportunity for us to strengthen partnerships, organize the application process, and further develop digital opportunities to interact with students and educators.

### **Amendment Requests June 1, 2020**

- We wish to make a small change to Activity 2. We would like to include middle school students in the wilderness trip age range. Most outfitting partners are interested in partnering with work with grades 6-12, and this way it is inclusive to all schools that do our classroom programming. Another reason for including middle school is that many high school students are working in the summer, and may not be

able to take a week off of work. This change allows us to be responsive to student needs and find the avenue that works best for a school or organization. As is our policy with all youth programming, all adults working directly with youth require a background check.

- We also wish to make two small amendments to our budget, in order to pivot our programming to make Activity 1 possible in the midst of the COVID pandemic and varying models of distanced, hybrid, and combination instruction happening in Minnesota schools and youth organizations.
  - In the Consulting position row: We are adding two new categories to fund technical consulting and execution as we pivot our in-person school programming to a virtual experience. We wish to remove some funds from the previous consulting position and allocate them to a digital consultant. Our proposed balance would be \$3,000 for GIS work on the curriculum, and \$10,000 for video editing and digital content creation, resulting in \$47,000 remaining for program associates, which will be in use when we are able to run wilderness trips.
  - In the Printing section: We would like to allocate a portion of the printed materials budget to be moved up to the equipment/supplies section for program material needs that are not printed, such as water quality tests, investigation supplies, or other items needed for the classroom program. Physical materials are an important piece of both the in-person and virtual outreach - these supplies can be delivered to schools participating in the program that are hybrid or in-person to coincide with the digital curriculum. We have reformulated the printing budget to be at \$1 / student, so this would bring the printing budget to \$6,480 and the materials budget to \$25,920 (\$372 has been spent, and moved under this new category on program supplies).

#### **Amendment approved by LCCMR on 9/17/2020**

#### **Second Update December 1, 2020**

Since the update in June, No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters has pivoted to a fully-online education outreach program, continued to build school and community organization partnerships, and are exploring several options for wilderness trips if the trips as outlined in Activity 2 are not possible or safe due to COVID.

Successful outreach opportunities through the MEA virtual conference, collaboration with Osprey Wild charter school network, and features in the Quetico Superior Newsletter have expanded our school partners significantly. All of these elements are outlined in further detail below.

#### **Amendment Requests February 2021**

- We wish to add a budget line within the “Other” budget category allocating \$10,000 from the scholarships line to host paddle day-trip experiences with BWCA-focused activities and skill building on waterways local to the community groups and schools we have engaged virtually this year. The goal of this event would be to provide a covid-safe way that students and their households can interact with elements of a Boundary Waters trip such as paddling, portaging, navigating, and learning more about the BWCA ecosystem. This experience would serve as an introduction to what a BWCA trip would look like, and would give them more confidence in signing up for a trip when it is safe to do so. These events would be open to household or family groups to allow for less covid risk, as well as begin building relationships with families. We would like to count these participants toward our totals for Activity 2, given the challenges and barriers to traveling safely at this time.
  - We are still considering possibilities of student trips for summer 2021, but this would allow for at least some sort of in-person engagement on the water to take place, and has the potential to be a building block for more students to feel excited about signing up for a BWCA experience in the future.

- These events would be in collaboration with partners such as Big City Mountaineers, Minneapolis Parks Board, and Three Rivers Parks to provide paddle locations, equipment, and additional instruction.
- These funds would go towards hosting local, small-group paddle days with BWCA activities for our partner schools and organizations.
  - We would like to hold 10 events for 3-hour programs, with 3 activities. These cost \$100/hour/activity for the group, with an additional \$100 to cover permitting.
  - The scholarship line has also been adjusted to reflect changes in pricing of canoe trips since this grant was written (from \$600 to \$700).
- We also wish to add a budget line item in the Equipment/Tools/Supplies category to allocate \$15,000 from the program associate contractor line to provide food for participants at these paddle day trip opportunities. We budgeted for \$15/person for 1,000 people over the course of 10 events, based on quotes for pre-boxed food that can be taken and eaten spread out from others to lessen COVID risks. We were not able to use these funds to recruit students last year because canoe trips were canceled.

**Amendment approved by LCCMR 2/23/2021**

**Amendment Request 3/18/2021:**

We wish to make an amendment to extend our project completion date. Due to COVID-19, getting students out to the BWCA was not possible in summer of 2020, and school visits were largely online through summer of 2021. We would like to extend our project completion date to the appropriation date of June 30, 2023, which was already included in the original work plan. By extending the project completion date to the appropriation date, we will be able to complete another school year and arrange much of the summer scholarships for an additional year to make up lost ground due to COVID-19. We would complete a final report by August 15th, 2023.

**Amendment approved by LCCMR 3/30/2021**

**Third Update June 1, 2021**

Since our last update in December of 2020, we've strengthened our relationships with schools, coordinated several "Boundary Waters Day" events that will take place with our school partners in their own communities over the summer, coordinated the application process for students to attend Camp Menogyn this summer, as well as continuing all of the virtual classroom work we have been doing throughout the pandemic such as virtual presentations and guest speakers. We have also begun collecting evaluations from teachers on the programming and continue to build partnerships for next year. You can find more detailed information in the updates below.

**Fourth Update December 1, 2021**

During the last sixth months since the previous update, our education program, No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters, has taken many steps forward as a COVID-adjusted world has begun to allow for more in-person opportunities. During the time of our last update, we were coordinating several "BWCA Paddle Days" at parks local to several of our partner schools. These were a covid-adjustment that proved to be a huge success, and something we plan to incorporate into regular programming. Throughout the summer we had several students participate in wilderness canoe trips at YMCA Camp Menogyn, even though the fire closures impacted several student trips.

With the start of the school year came a whole new type of programming as schools went back into session and in-person school programs became possible. In early fall, the Friends organized a structure for teachers to find,

explore, and sign up for our programs. This, along with outreach and previous partnerships, led to a full fall of school programming reaching over 800 students and providing over 1,000 program experiences.

More details are provided on each area below.

### **Fifth Update June 1, 2022**

As we enter the third summer of this program, we are immensely excited to be seeing parts of our program come to life that were not possible in previous years. Our program has flourished with schools opening up their doors to guest programs again, and we recorded a very busy May program season as the weather warmed. Programs such as ours, that provide social, outdoor, hands-on activities, are in high demand as we come out of several school years where students were in and out of isolation.

We are also thrilled to be coordinating the first large-scale summer of trip groups from our partner schools and youth-serving organizations. Our new program additions, such as trip information sessions and trip prep programs help our organization to best equip and meet the needs of the groups that will be new to the BWCA this summer.

We continue to add new teachers to our network as we have hosted more in-person events and conducted increased teacher outreach. We are systemizing our approach for teacher feedback, trips preparation, partner coordination, and more as our program grows.

More details are provided on our specific program areas in the updates below.

### **Amendment Request June 1, 2022**

We wish to submit an amendment for approval, specifically in our budget. We hope that it has been clear from our updates that we have adapted to the pandemic in every way we can, finding success and impact even as schools were virtual. Our program has had a successful launch and impacted thousands of students virtually. Now as we have transitioned to in-person programs, demand for our programs have been high as we adapted to serving students both in-person, virtually, and through BWCA trips. The increased impact has demonstrated the need for an additional full-time staff, which we hired in May. This need for additional support, as well as the extended timeline of our grant period due to the pandemic are the reasons for our amendment request to alter our budget to place additional amounts in staffing.

Due to essentially missing out on almost two full school years of in-person programming, as well as two trip seasons due to COVID-19, there are budget items associated with our program that we have not needed the full amount on, such as printing, mileage, and more. We fully expect that the updated amounts in these selected budget categories will allow us to carry out our program successfully, and that reallocating these funds to staffing will support successful, impactful programming for the rest of the grant period and beyond.

- To more accurately reflect our staffing budget, we have changed the rate of pay for the Education and Community Coordinator to reflect what this position was hired at in order to remain competitive - \$53,000. The Friends have since given appropriate raises, have matched those additional amounts, along with .2 FTE of the position. We have also changed the duration to 3.66 years, as well as for the education assistant position.
- We have added a full-time Education Trips Coordinator at \$49,000, and we would like to use the additional allocation to fund this position through this grant at .8 FTE for the next year.

All adjustments may be found in the budget. We recognize that these may look like a lot of changes, but all of the changes are realistic expectations of what the program needs in its final year in this grant cycle in order to

meet (and in some areas exceed) the goals. We are more than happy to answer any questions that may come up.

**Amendment Approved by LCCMR 7/5/2022**

**Sixth Update December 1 2022**

In our last update before our final report, we are pleased to offer several updates on the growth of the program over the last 6 months.

This summer we held our first full summer of trip groups from our school and youth organization partners. We believe that the school programs and trip preparation programs at the end of the school year were instrumental to positive experiences on trail. Our school partners are already seeing increased interest for opportunities next summer. We look forward to detailing more about our first large-scale tripping summer below.

This fall, due to increased staff, we were able to hold more programs and reach more students than we ever have, throughout many parts of Minnesota. Not only this, but due to having more staff, we were able to run more programs with multiple activities, which increases our relationship building with a school as we work with multiple teachers or entire grade levels during a program instead of just one classroom. Our update in Activity 1 dives deeper into the programming held this summer and fall.

What is most exciting about this current update is that for the first time we have been able to truly build on the foundations of last year's in-person programming. It is extremely exciting to finally be in a position where we can see growth year over year instead of constantly adjusting during the pandemic. We'd like to take this opportunity to express gratitude for all of the flexibility from LCCMR during these shifting times. Thank you!

**Amendment Request March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

We wish to submit a few small amendments to the budget for approval. As we approach the end of our project, there are a few categories that have more funds than needed, and a couple categories that could use some more funds as we continue to offer programming to schools around the state.

Located in the budget spreadsheet, we adjusted the budgets for lines 18, 19, 20, 23 to better reflect the needs for those areas until the end of our project and to free up some funds for areas that need more support from now until June. We are moving funds from those areas into lines 37 and 38 to allow for more travel to areas around Minnesota, as well as into line 13 (staffing) for additional support in that area. The total funds moved are less than \$5,000.

**Amendment approved by LCCMR April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023.**

**Amendment Request June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023**

We wish to submit a final amendment request to ensure that the final totals match all of our final amounts. At this point we have delivered all of our outcomes and are able to adjust these balances to ensure that all funds are spent as we total last expenses for these categories. We will report on all final outcomes during the final report.



In the budget spreadsheet, we adjusted the budget slightly in several lines, though no total adjustment is over \$1,500. In the personnel section, we made a mistake during our last amendment and factored in the full season of our seasonal program assistant work when we only had a portion of the season. This total line-item budget has not changed, but we moved funds from one position to another to more accurately reflect the final balances of these positions. The breakdown of changes follows:

Videography \$5,375 to \$5,238  
Independent contractor \$1,300 to \$12,182  
Educational materials for classroom use \$13,568 to \$12,997  
Food for participants \$5,378 to \$5,728  
Printing for classroom use: \$938 to \$821  
Printing for canoe trips: \$390 to \$1,770  
Travel to schools: \$7,593 to \$7,993  
Staff food and lodging on overnight stays: \$3,500 to \$3,900  
Local trip experiences: \$4,321 to \$3,434

**Amendment approved by LCCMR August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

**Final Report Between June 30th and August 15th, 2023**

Although approximately 200,000 people visit the Boundary Waters each year, many Minnesotans have never been to the Boundary Waters and may not appreciate its unique wildlife, ecology, culture, and history. This project aimed to connect students (grades 6-12) to the BWCA through classroom education and wilderness canoe experiences, targeting diverse and underserved students throughout Minnesota.

Through two components of this program, classroom visits and wilderness trips, over 8,000 program experiences to 6,324 students were provided – not including the over 30,000 students estimated to access our online materials.

Though COVID-19 prevented us from launching in-person programs until 2021, our online lessons allowed us to reach students across the state. These lessons are still used frequently in classrooms, both with schools as a precursor to a visit, and on their own to teach about Boundary Waters ecology, history, and Anishinaabe culture. In 2021, in-person lessons began in schoolyards around Minnesota. Our evaluations of the programs show that these lessons were valuable in bringing a greater understanding of the Boundary Waters, encouraging students to spend more time outdoors, and offering opportunities for students to work together.

In our wilderness trip component, 210 students attended overnight trips, and 230 participants attended local paddle programs. Local programs served as a COVID-19 alternative until overnight trips began in 2022 and doubled participants in 2023. Our evaluations from chaperones on these wilderness trips highlight the personal growth and leadership they saw from students, and student evaluations highlight confidence and positive relationships during their overnight experience.

By building connections to the BWCA through classroom experiences across the state, and increasing student confidence, leadership, and positive peer relationships in overnight trips, this program serves to benefit Minnesota by inspiring the next generation of wilderness stewards that reflect the many different communities of our state.

**Post close adjustment as of 1/26/24**

In the reimbursement process, we found that there was an error in our final budget. We have corrected the error by changing the amount spent on the Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Food for day trip program participants budget line from \$5,728 to \$4,906. We have made this change in the budget and have updated the final amount spent and amount remaining on p. 1 of the work plan and on the final abstract.

**Amendment approved by LCCMR 3/14/24**

**III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:**

**Activity 1: Connecting 6,480 Students from Across Minnesota to the Boundary Waters Through Classroom Education**

An Education and Community Outreach Coordinator will give presentations at schools across Minnesota to educate students (grades 6-12) about the Boundary Waters, with an emphasis on diverse and underserved students who would not otherwise have exposure to the Boundary Waters. This activity will reach a total of 6,480 students over a three-year period, in all four Minnesota DNR Regions across the state (Northwest, Northeast, Southern, and Central). Students will learn about the wildlife and ecology of the Boundary Waters, the unique history of the Boundary Waters, historical figures (i.e., Sig Olson, Dorothy Molter), and the Leave No Trace principle. This will also be an opportunity to recruit interested students for multi-day wilderness canoe trips in the Boundary Waters as outlined in Activity 2.

Activity 1 will build upon and expand our existing curriculum related to the Boundary Waters called “The BWCA Wilderness Kit.” The BWCA Wilderness Kit is an engaging, hands-on curriculum designed for middle school-aged youth that introduces students to the Boundary Waters and helps them explore and discover the wonders of Minnesota’s one-of-a-kind wilderness area. The kit was developed with educator involvement and in partnership with the Superior National Forest. The units and activities are aimed at middle school grade levels (6-8), however, each lesson is flexible enough to tailor content to an older audience. The BWCA Wilderness Kit does not currently include any lesson plans or materials related to copper-nickel sulfide mining and we will not include that subject as part of the educational program.

**ENRTF BUDGET: \$ 218,750**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Year 1: 840 diverse and underserved students (grades 6-12) from across Minnesota develop an understanding and appreciation of the Boundary Waters (Computation: 7 visits/year x 120 students/visit = 840 students)	6/30/2021
2. Year 2: 2,640 diverse and underserved students (grades 6-12) from across Minnesota develop an understanding and appreciation of the Boundary Waters (Computation: 22 visits/year x 120 students/visit = 2,640 students)	6/30/2022
3. Year 3: 3,000 diverse and underserved students (grades 6-12) from across Minnesota develop an understanding and appreciation of the Boundary Waters (Computation: 25 visits/year x 120 students/visit = 3,000 students)	6/30/2023
4. Total Impact: 6,480 diverse and underserved students (grades 6-12) from across Minnesota develop an understanding and appreciation of the Boundary Waters	6/30/2023

**First Update June 1, 2020**

Pre-COVID, we were preparing to present the new No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters curriculum at several schools and district events in greater Minnesota this spring. A revised curriculum was created, expanding on the Wilderness Kit and focusing on hands-on student experiences, and we began to procure supplies and materials for the program. One program with 60 students was possible before schools closed, which provided helpful feedback, photos, and testimonials.

Post-COVID, we are rescheduling visits for next school year, maintaining relationships with districts, and adapting curriculum to meet the needs of online learning, in the likely scenario that schools would be fully or partially online in the coming fall. One of the ways we have been meeting this need is by creating video content, and adding a new educational-media portion of our website. Other methods of digital outreach are covered below in the dissemination update. We are exploring the possibility of a completely digital curriculum to meet the uncertain needs of the school year.

### **Second Update December 1, 2020**

Since the update in June, No Boundaries has had a successful launch of our fully virtual program, which includes online materials, introduction presentations, and “Ask the Expert” sessions. When teachers sign up for the materials, they indicate the number of students they plan to engage with the program, as well as school, grade, and subject. Based on these sign-up forms, there are roughly 4,700 students accessing these materials this school year so far. With most schools either fully virtual or in hybrid programming, switching to a virtual program has been a successful way to connect with more schools and programs.

The online materials consist of asynchronous units that are self-paced, contain beautiful photos and videos, and include interactive elements such as 3D, maneuverable skull models. This program walks students through different BWCA topics, and then presents an opportunity to bring their observation skills outside into their own green spaces (with alternative opportunities, in case access to the outdoors is not possible). In addition to the materials, there are also teacher guides with standards, extension activities, and tips.

In order to receive a link to the materials, teachers fill out a short questionnaire that helps to keep track of who is using the materials (we also have google analytics set up on these links as well). Once on our list, teachers receive a monthly “No Boundaries Teacher Network” email with an extra online resource each month, as well as information about our other program opportunities such as live virtual presentations.

No Boundaries has launched two types of virtual presentations, which both can be done on whichever platform is used by the school for virtual learning. One is an introduction session led by Alison Nyenhuis, education manager, and the other is an “Ask the Expert” session. Teachers chose a topic from a list of presenters, and these 30-minute sessions are then hosted and coordinated by the education manager.

The links to the online curriculum are below:

[No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters Unit Collection](#)  
[Teacher Resources Collection](#)

### **Third Update June 1, 2021**

We are currently wrapping up the school year for 2020-2021, which was likely one of the strangest school years we’ll ever witness. Despite the challenges of distance learning and the difficulty of incorporating new material in a year where everything changed multiple times, we were able to make connections and have a positive impact

on students through [virtual units](#), [virtual presentations](#), and [resources for teachers](#) (an example of a monthly newsletter is linked).

Earlier this year, we promoted the online programs and encouraged teachers to sign up for our materials, virtual presentations, and virtual guest presentations with various BWCA experts. To date, we have had 82 educators sign up for access to our materials, estimating the number of students they planned to reach at 6,817 students. Teachers were able to use these materials for their own background information, incorporate into units, participate in virtual presentations, whatever worked for them. In this difficult year, giving teachers options and flexibility was very important to us.

We connected our online units with Google Analytics, and found that nearly 900 users interacted with the pages. The number of students reached with these materials is likely much higher - in my conversations with teachers I found that many of them shared their screen and taught directly from the units to their students.

In the virtual presentations with Alison Nyenhuis and other BWCA guest speakers held throughout the school year, we presented to 380 students on a variety of topics including water quality, climate change in the Boundary Waters, history in the BWCA, and a “Day in the Life” of a ranger. These presentations were also recorded by several schools and used for further learning with students who could not attend. We also partnered with Wilderness Inquiry to provide virtual programming for their virtual explorers program, and through our collaboration we provided an additional 89 experiences.

We recently sent out a feedback form for teachers to fill out as their school year closes. We have received several responses so far, and it is clear that our materials were engaging to students, encouraged students to spend time outside, and connected the BWCA to subjects students were learning in class. We look forward to reporting the complete picture of school responses in the next update.

#### **Fourth Update December 1, 2021**

This fall finally provided us the opportunity to get our programming in schools in-person, something that had not been done since late February of 2020 when the Friends delivered our first (and only) in-person lesson of 2020. With the emphasis on digital and distance learning last year, many teachers seemed eager to get their students doing hands-on activities, especially outdoors.

Prior to the school year, we advertised our educational resources with Facebook ads, which brought in 158 additional teachers to our “No Boundaries Educator Network” which gives them full access to our online resources and allows them to sign up for in-person and virtual school visits ([Course Catalog packet here](#)). We're working with schools to integrate BWCA programming into their classrooms multiple times throughout the year, combining outdoor, in-classroom, virtual, and online programming to connect the BWCA to what students are already doing in their classes, ranging from grades 5-12 from locations in New Prague to Duluth.

Between September and mid-November, 1,090 program experiences were provided to a total of 804 students, with the difference in these numbers due to some classrooms participating in multiple courses. Almost all experiences included an introduction unit, either taught virtually, in-person, or facilitated by the teacher using

our online materials, as well as an additional course relating to the BWCA, such as animal adaptations, map and compass, or other courses (see [course catalog](#) for all). Almost all classroom courses were requested over the fall, and a total of 14 schools participated in virtual or in-person school visits. Several of these schools are pursuing wilderness canoe trips through our program as well, and these visits are a great way for students to build familiarity and skills before a wilderness trip experience.

We also leveraged strong partnerships with Project Success and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to create unique field trip experiences this fall for three Minneapolis middle schools, Jefferson, Franklin, and Northeast. This collaboration resulted in a BWCA Station Day field trip at Lake Hiawatha in Minneapolis. It included paddling, portaging, map and compass, animal adaptations, and fire-building. These field trips reached 218 students and we look forward to continuing our collaboration with both of these organizations.

After all classroom experiences, teachers have the opportunity to fill out a feedback form for the program. We also collected evaluations from teachers at the end of the 2020-2021 school year, looking back on the full year of programming. The [program evaluations for the fall](#) and [overall 2020-2021 school year evaluations](#) are linked. A snapshot is provided below.

***In the Fall 2021 program evaluations, 100% of the teachers surveyed would recommend the program to others. Additional comments below:***

- Yes! The kids loved the hands-on experience with the skulls. They also liked the game.
- Yes! It was wonderful! The hands on was the best!
- Yes....very hands on and student friendly
- Yes, provided exposure to an important area of Minnesota that is otherwise ignored by most Minnesotans, understanding, appreciation for and respect for the outdoor, hands-on activities, and engagement.
- Yes, my students were very engaged and learned a lot about using compasses.
- Yes, absolutely! The more opportunities provided to educate and expose youth to our natural resources the better!
- Absolutely. The online materials were very well put together and easy to follow. Alison was an amazing and engaging presenter.

#### **Fifth Update June 1, 2022**

During the last six months, our classroom-focused program has continued to grow as we entered the second half of the school year. This past fall was our first opportunity to hold classroom visits in person, and this spring we have had a packed schedule as schools requested program visits. Teachers were able to identify courses they wished to bring to their school with our [course catalog](#), and the years of covid programming allowed us the flexibility to hold virtual introduction visits before going out to the school. The addition of another staff as well as an education intern for the summer has allowed us the flexibility to run BWCA Adventure days, where students have the opportunity to go through several stations all in their school yard. Since our last update, we have provided 970 program experiences for 559 new students (some students had multiple experiences during the school year), for a total of 2,060 program experiences brought to 1,363 over the school year thus far – we will have a few more programs in the first two weeks of June as the school year wraps up. [All of the data collected on our visits can be viewed here.](#)

Many of our spring programs were with schools who are going on BWCA trips this summer, and this school-wide program allowed for students to learn more about the trip opportunities and ask questions. These programs were great tools to reach more potential students for wilderness trips, either this year or in future years as we continue to grow our relationship with school partners.

Another tool we use to deepen our relationships with schools is our [BWCA Paddle Days](#). These began as a response to COVID last summer, when there was uncertainty around if overnight trips would be possible. They featured several free stations, including canoeing, with BWCA activities, at a park local to the school. The pivot to family-centered programming turned out to be a great success, and we are incorporating it into our programs again this year. We currently have three paddle day program planned, one for our Minneapolis and west-metro school/organization partners, one for our St. Paul and East Metro partners, and one in Duluth for our north-east MN partners. These events are open to the whole school community – some students may come to practice their paddling skills before a trip, others may just join in. Our hope is that families grow more familiar and confident with our organization, which we recognize is key to bringing students on trips. These days also help to deepen our relationships with each school community. We look forward to providing an update on how our BWCA Paddle Days go in June and July.

We also have been able to remain flexible by working with several different tripping partners and integrating this into our classroom programming when appropriate. For example, our relationship with Wilderness Inquiry has allowed us to provide scaffolded programming for a special-education focused program in Osseo, MN. This group started with a school visit, plans to do a local canoeing program this June, and will build up to a BWCA trip over the next two years. We were also able to collaborate with Spirit of the Wilderness Outfitters in Ely to bring a school program to a local park and incorporate canoeing. It is relationships like these with our school partners and outfitting partners that allow us to best identify and address the barriers to visiting the BWCA, and incorporate this into our classroom programming.

### **Sixth Update December 1 2022**

Since our last update, we completed 2021-2022 school year programming in early June, participated in a few summer youth events, and accomplished the largest programming season to date this fall. You can view details of each program in our No Boundaries Participant Log (Document 2), attached separately.

Fall 2022:

We have seen significant growth in our school-based programming since our last update. As schools have continued to “normalize” following the height of the pandemic, we have seen an increased demand from teachers who want to get their students outside and interacting with one another.

Our No Boundaries Educator Network has continued to grow, making this fall the busiest school program season we have had yet. Between the months of September and November 2022, we served 2,086 students in programming focused on the Boundary Waters, exploring the outdoors, and working together, all connected to Minnesota State Standards. [You can find our curriculum offerings here](#). With additional staff support we were able to run more multi-activity programming to serve multiple classrooms at once, engaging more teachers in the process and strengthening relationships with the school.

Impact:

- 2,191 students in 5-12th grade served in programs this fall. Up from 804 students in Fall 2021. Our full program log is attached separately - Document 2\_No Boundaries School Program Log

- Programming in the following cities: St. Paul, Minneapolis, Barnum, Braham, Brooklyn Park, Baudette, Lake of the Woods, Fond Du Lac Reservation, Willow River, Cook, Keewatin, Bemidji, Osseo, Albertville, Apple Valley, Prior Lake, Duluth, Inver Grove Heights.
- 24 program days from September - November.
- Program Evaluations from participating teachers can be found in Document 3\_Teacher Evaluations

Included in these numbers are continued partnerships with organizations like Project Success; we held the second year of BWCA Field Trip days at Lake Hiawatha in September with several Minneapolis middle schools. These were a collaboration between the Friends of the BWCA, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and Project Success to give the students an immersive experience into what a BWCA trip is like.

We look forward to continuing to provide programming to schools throughout the spring in 2023.

### **Final Report Between June 30th and August 15th 2023**

Since our last update, we have served 810 students with 1,276 program experiences this spring. Many of these students had a second experience with us as we got them ready for their trips, hence the difference in the number of experiences provided and number of students. We have continued to collect information at the school level, such as free and reduced lunch rates, and school demographic statistics when available.

In total over the course of the grant period, we reached 6,324 students and provided 7,747 program experiences. Schools participated in a variety of different courses, and all information can be found in the Program Participant Log. The number of students reached in our direct programs is just slightly under what we had initially intended, with COVID-19 inhibiting a year and a half of inperson programs for us. However, with students utilizing our online programs we more than meet this goal; the No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters teacher network includes 540 teachers who use our online resources with an estimated audience of over 40,000 students.

Based on the feedback that we received from teachers following our programs, we are confident that these programs increased students understanding and appreciation of the Boundary Waters, as well as with the outdoor spaces near their own community. 95% of teachers indicated that they believed these programs were more likely to encourage their students to spend time outdoors, and 100% would recommend the program to others. A few highlights from teachers:

*Thank you! We really appreciate you joining us. I have gotten very positive feedback from the students about the lesson/activity. They would like to get outside and do more with compasses. They also seemed to enjoy learning about the Boundary Waters as most have never been.*

*It was just a great feeling seeing my students being engaged during the whole lesson: listening intently to the instructors' discussion of the BWCA, collaborating on the packets and Venn diagrams, etc. BUT the magic happened when we got outside. My students were FULLY engaged and analyzing trees with great precision. They loved it.*

*Seeing some students become leaders or show confidence who may not have previously experienced a lot of academic success was awesome.*

For the full report, see “Document 1: No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters Program Feedback 2020-2023”.

These outcomes are significant because over 6,000 students received hands-on, environmental education that introduced them to a unique natural resource that we are lucky to have in Minnesota. Many students encountered the Boundary Waters through our online programs. Additionally, many teachers have shared these resources year after year, introducing even more students. Awareness of this place is the first step of many, with some students continuing with us into Activity 2, and some students sharing it with their families and trying a trip on their own. We believe this activity has had an incredible impact in getting more students across Minnesota connected to the Boundary Waters.

Impact since last update:

- 1,276 program experiences were provided to 810 students in 6-12<sup>th</sup>. Our full program log is attached separately – “Document 2 Program Participant Log.”
- Programming in the following cities: St. Paul, Minneapolis, Barnum, Brooklyn Park, Fond Du Lac Reservation, Willow River, Bemidji, Hill City, Osseo, Apple Valley, Anoka, Maple Grove, and Mankato.

Total Impact:

- 7,747 program experiences provided to 6,324 students in 5-12th grade. Our full program log is attached separately - Document 2 Program Participant Log
- Programming in the following cities: St. Paul, Minneapolis, Bradley (IL), Brooklyn Park, Pillager, Champlin, Woodbury, Ely, Edina; Red Wing, Albert Lea, Saint Paul; Makinen; Monticello; Euclid; Hopkins, Barnum, New Prague, Mendota Heights, Duluth, Lindstrom, Prior Lake, Tower, Grand Rapids, Belgrade, Osseo, Apple Valley, Alexandria, Braham, Baudette, Lake of the Woods, Fond Du Lac Reservation, Willow River, Cook, Keewatin, Bemidji, Albertville, Inver Grove Heights, Hill City, Anoka, Maple Grove, Mankato. With programs including students from: Two Harbors, Clearbrook, Adams, Newport, WACONIA, Ortonville, Owatonna, Clear Lake, Big Lake, Red Wing, Shevlin, Sauk Rapids, Jordan, Brook Park, SHEVLIN, Duluth, ORTONVILLE, Hutchinson.
- Program Evaluations from participating teachers can be found in Document 1, “No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters Program Feedback 2020-2023” and Document 4, “Program Feedback Summary 2020-2021.”
- A full list of the No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters Educator Network can be found in Document 5.

**Activity 2: Providing 250 Diverse and Underserved Students from Across Minnesota with a Multi-Day Wilderness Canoe Experience in the Boundary Waters or day trips in Minnesota waterways when an overnight trip is not possible.**

While many Minnesotans are familiar with the Boundary Waters, for others it is a remote and foreign place that they may never visit because of cost or distance. To alleviate these barriers, this program will provide scholarships to 250 diverse and underserved middle and high-school students from across Minnesota so that they can experience a multi-day, wilderness canoe trip in the Boundary Waters. These students will develop leadership skills and learn how to be self-reliant outdoors through hands-on activities such as canoeing, portaging, building a fire, pitching a tent, and fishing. They will also develop love and respect for the wilderness by learning about the unique wildlife, ecology, history, and culture of the Boundary Waters. When a multi-day



BWCA trip is not possible due to COVID, students will be engaged in these skills through day-trip opportunities in waterways close to their homes.

This Activity will leverage our existing collaborative partnership with YMCA Camp Menogyn to build on our current program that provides multi-day wilderness canoe experiences in the Boundary Waters for approximately 30-60 students each year from underserved and diverse communities in Minnesota. In the past, this program has relied on several community partners to help recruit and sponsor youth from diverse and underserved backgrounds. For example, in 2017 these organizations included Learning Works, Venture Academy, Hiawatha Academy, Hmong Outdoor Leadership Training, Tamales y Bicicletas, REBOUND Minneapolis, YMCA Intervention Services, TORCH, and White Bear Lake Community Education. We will build upon these existing partnerships and create new ones to ensure a statewide reach.

**ENRTF BUDGET: \$ 231,250**

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Year 1: 50 diverse and underserved students (grades 6-12) from across Minnesota have a multi-day wilderness canoe experience in the Boundary Waters or day trips on Minnesota waterways, developing leadership skills and self-reliance through hands-on activities.	9/15/2021
2. Year 2: 75 diverse and underserved students (grades 6-12) from across Minnesota have a multi-day wilderness canoe experience in the Boundary Waters or day trips on Minnesota waterways, developing leadership skills and self-reliance through hands-on activities.	9/15/2022
3. Year 3: 125 diverse and underserved students (grades 6-12) from across Minnesota have a multi-day wilderness canoe experience in the Boundary Waters or day trips on Minnesota waterways, developing leadership skills and self-reliance through hands-on activities.	6/30/2023
4. Total Impact: 250 diverse and underserved students (grades 6-12) from across Minnesota have a multi-day wilderness canoe experience in the Boundary Waters or day trips on Minnesota waterways, developing leadership skills and self-reliance through hands-on activities.	6/30/2023

**First Update June 1, 2020**

Since January, I have met with various partners in outfitting, such as YMCA Camp Menogyn, Wilderness Inquiry, and Wilderness Canoe Base to develop a system for signing up groups through the No Boundaries program. It is clear that having more than one outfitting partner allows us to meet the needs of specific groups, whether those are related to transportation, length of trip, or type of programming. In order to accurately track information and to ensure that scholarship funds go towards diverse and underserved students, we have developed an application procedure for schools and organizations wishing to apply for scholarship funds through No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters.

We have made other key partnerships to expand on trip opportunities in the coming years, such as CLUES, Project Success, Fond Du Lac Community Tribal College, and Cedar-Riverside Neighborhood Council. CLUES, which is a community group designed to support primary low-income students of a Latinx background, had moved forward with us in applications for a wilderness trip and we were scheduling their trip for this July. We

are now in the process of rescheduling their trip for next summer and will use this time to continue to recruit students for summer 2021.

With Project Success, along with other partners including Wilderness Inquiry, we were able to collaborate on a “BWCA Adventures: Minneapolis Edition,” which featured a virtual camp week with videos, activities, prizes, and BWCA-themed at-home events. This was a great collaborative success amidst an uncertain time, and provided us a template for such an event were trips to also be canceled summer 2021.

### **Second Update December 1, 2020**

Since the last update, we have continued to form and strengthen partnerships with community groups, as well as adding several schools to our program. These groups are excited to scaffold the educational programming up to trip opportunities in the Boundary Waters.

Since the last update, we have kept in touch with the outfitters mentioned above regarding their different scenarios for summer 2021. Many are in flux, and have several contingency plans depending on the state of the vaccine, but are moving forward with booking groups. As the coordinating organization between the policies of the outfitter as well as the policies of the participating groups (individual schools or community organizations), we will need to accommodate for different scenarios. Ideally, we would love to send groups of students on traditional canoe trips, but acknowledge that may not be possible for all of our participating partners. We are exploring alternatives to traditional trips if need be.

One option is offering scholarships for family or household trips. This strategy will work very well with our community partners who already engage families and can easily recruit for household experiences, such as the CLUES organization. In conversations with the outfitters listed above, all are willing and able to host household groups. This also aligns with advice we have received from Diversity and Inclusion consultants to engage family units as a first step towards equity in the outdoors.

Another option, as an alternative to multi-day wilderness trips, is local or BWCA day trips. For our schools and community groups that are based farther up north, a day trip to the BWCA might be the safest or only option allowed in their COVID policies. For schools or community groups based in the Twin Cities that are not allowing overnight trips and are not interested in family options, we are considering paddle days on local waterways, utilizing partners such as Wilderness Inquiry or Big City Mountaineers.

There are currently many moving pieces with this Activity, but the Friends are considering many options and gathering the necessary information from our partners.

### **Third Update June 1, 2021**

We are currently gearing up to have an exciting summer for No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters. We have identified a group of core school and organization partners that have been utilizing our virtual materials throughout the year, and were interested in either local BWCA skills days, or introducing trip opportunities to students. Due to the uncertainty of what the summer would look like (related to COVID) earlier this year, we decided to have multiple options for students to get involved.

With several of our partner schools, we presented the opportunity to have a “BWCA Day” that would be local to their community, where students could come with their families or households to try out paddling, portaging,

fishing, and other activities. This would be an opportunity to further our relationships with these schools and communities and continue to scaffold towards the experience of a BWCA trip for these schools in the future. We are excited to be holding several of these events in the coming months, and look forward to updating the LCCMR on their progress and attendance with our next update. We expect to reach over 150 students and their families in this way this summer, and are partnering with several organizations such as St. Paul Parks, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Big City Mountaineers, Three Rivers Parks to make these events happen for our partner schools and organizations.

Another way we are reaching students this summer is through traditional wilderness trip opportunities. We would have preferred to send groups of students from the schools or community organizations so that they could experience this with a group of peers and mentors from their own community, but due to COVID, organizing an overnight trip through a school or organization was a bit risky earlier this spring. But we still recognized that students needed opportunities like this at this time more than ever. We decided to offer individual trip scholarships to Camp Menogyn, and had students from our participating schools have the opportunity to apply on their own to attend Camp Menogyn. We've approved scholarships for approximately 25 students (as space allowed at Camp Menogyn, who has capacity restrictions for this summer) to have a BWCA wilderness trip experience this summer. We are looking forward to updating with more details on the student and their experiences after the trips occur.

#### **Fourth Update December 1, 2021**

Since our last update, several students have had wilderness canoe experiences through this program at YMCA Camp Menogyn, and we have hosted several schools in a COVID-responsive "BWCA Days" at lakes local to the school communities. These "BWCA Days" would be local to their community, where students could come with their families or households to try out paddling, portaging, fishing, and other activities. This would also be an opportunity to further our relationships with these schools and communities. What began as a response to COVID turned out to be a wonderful opportunity to bring the whole family into the experience, which is essential for student participation in our program, and particularly important for students new to the Boundary Waters or outdoor activities in general.

Throughout these BWCA Days, we collaborated with partners such as Minneapolis Parks and Recreation, Big City Mountaineers, and Three Rivers, along with several of our partner schools and organizations - Noble Academy, Prairie Seeds Academy, St. Peter Claver, CLUES, and Laura Jeffery. We even hosted a BWCA day trip for students in the Ely Key Club. Over the course of these BWCA Days, we hosted 167 people, with roughly 50% of participants reporting that it was their first time canoeing. We asked participants to share highlights and one said "I loved getting to paddle! Carrying a canoe was fun, too. So nice to spend the day outside canoeing with family." It was a great success, and we look forward to continuing to incorporate the whole family into our programming.

For wilderness canoe trips, due to COVID, we decided to extend an opportunity for individuals to sign up for camp, since putting together an overnight group from the school was not possible due to COVID restrictions during the 2020-2021 school year. This adjustment allowed for families to apply for a scholarship individually. We had approved a total of 25 scholarships and 20 students registered. Unfortunately, due to the fires and the closure of the BWCA, only 8 of those students were able to attend their trips. These students will be extended another opportunity this year, and we are trying to schedule in early summer to hopefully avoid a similar situation this year.

Prior to their wilderness trip, students received a package with some gear needed for the trip, such as a water bottle and a wicking shirt, along with a welcome letter from the Friends. We also hosted a virtual Q&A session with families. After their trip experience, students received a postcard in the mail encouraging them to share their camp story. An example of a shared camp story is below:

*"I was nervous to meet new people and I had to get used to that all over again because of covid. But when I got there I wasn't the only one. A lot of others felt the same way. I ended up making great friends that helped with my anxiety and made the rest of my trip great. It was fun canoeing and setting up the tents. They always teach you how to do those things first before going on trail. I'm glad I [went on this trip] and hope to do it again."*

Going forward into the 2021-2022 school year, we have been working with partner schools and organizations on arranging group trips for the summer of 2022. One approach that has been successful is framing the trips in group prices, with scholarship allocations based on the percentage of students that qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch at the school (this approach and pricing tiers were discussed with and approved by LCCMR staff, as well as discussed with teachers and school staff to make sure prices were realistic and attainable). The scholarship tiers are listed below.

Scholarship Funding Tiers	Scholarship funds utilized per group (roughly - some differences in camps/outfitters may vary this amount).
75%-100%: \$200 per trip group (5-7 students, one adult from the school, 1-2 guides). (\$25 per student)	\$5,400
50%-75%: \$500 per trip group (\$65 per individual attending)	\$5,100
25%-50%: \$2000 per trip group (\$215 per individual)	\$3,600
0-20% FRL: \$5,000 per trip group (\$625 per individual)	\$1,000

The tiers serve as a starting point for us to structure the conversation about scholarships and ensure we are distributing funds equitably without the unnecessary singling out of students who request scholarships. This structure also allows schools the flexibility to divide it individually, fundraise for it as part of their programming, or use grants or field trip budget to offset the cost for the trips - or a combination of several of these approaches. It also allows us to more accurately plan for the number of trips we can offer, without waiting for students to apply individually during the spring. We will still collect individual information from students during registration.

We have been working with partner schools and organizations to plan trips with this tiered approach and it has been successful. We are currently working with schools to determine the number of trip groups they are committed to bringing out (usually 1-2 groups), and we look forward to updating the LCCMR in June on trip registration and scholarship allocation.

**Fifth Update June 1, 2022**

Throughout the last six months since our December 2021 update, our trip program has been very active as we prepare for our first large-scale summer of trips. Due to the pandemic, last year we were only able to have individual students sign up for trips. While we had some students sign up for trips last year, we knew that

involving the partner schools or organizations further would help with recruitment, communication to students and families, and increase the community focus of the trip experiences. This has proven to be absolutely true as we have involved the school or youth organization in planning the trips this summer.

Earlier this fall, schools committed to participating in the tripping program, committing to one or two trip groups for the summer. Each school also committed to having at least one school staff on each trip. The trip fees were determined in part by the school's free and reduced lunch rate, as well as discussions with school staff to determine if this rate was accessible for their student populations. Once these pieces were in place, in January we began reserving their trips with one of our outfitting partners (YMCA Camp Menogyn, Wilderness Inquiry, Big City Mountaineers, Wilderness Canoe Base, and Spirit of the Wilderness). Having many outfitting partners allowed for us to find dates that worked for the group, as well as customize the experience to the needs of the school.

We currently have eight schools/organizations set to have groups "on trail" this summer, totaling in about 14 trip groups with an estimated 75 students. Prior to signing up for a trip, we held virtual information sessions both during school and after hours to address questions of parents or guardians. As we have tracked student sign-up for trips and helped to facilitate the registration process, we are in communication with teachers on needs like gear and other questions. We also have held special "pre-trip programming" with the trip groups from each organization to build their skills before the trip. This program usually consists of skills like fire-building, map and compass, portaging, all while getting to know the trip group and working on their communication and teamwork. We have held pre-trip programming for 33 students and will continue with more students throughout the month of June (details on this programming can be found in our [Program Participant Log](#)).

We look forward to reporting on specific group data, trip experiences, evaluations, and stories from the summer in our December 2022 update.

### **Sixth Update December 1 2022**

We were extremely excited to be able to hold our first summer of group wilderness trips in 2022. Our organization settled into our role of liaison between the school groups and partner camps/outfitters as we prepared the student groups, provided gear, facilitated the registration process, and conducted student and teacher chaperone evaluations of the trip.

The schools and organizations that participated in the trips came from the metro area as well as greater Minnesota, and had varying levels of financial need. You can find the profiles of each group attached in a separate document (Document 4\_Trip Partner Profiles) which includes demographic information, as well as the Free and Reduced Lunch rate. This information, as well as discussions with the teachers, were used to determine the scholarship amount awarded to the group. A tiered approach to scholarship award is detailed in this document. We also collected information from the individuals who attended the trip, which you can find in Document 5\_Trip Participants 2022. We removed sensitive information such as addresses, and we ask that the students' names not be published externally.

Our organization has been able to fill a need through this program as we work with groups to prepare them for a wilderness experience with a camp or outfitter. Many of our camp/outfitting partners have very busy summers, and the support we offer groups as they prepare, pack, and register increases the likelihood of a positive wilderness experience. This summer we were able to connect with all of the groups attending wilderness trips to answer questions, practice camping skills, ensure all registration materials had been completed, and provide

them with personal gear such as a wicking shirt and water bottle, as well as loan out raincoats, headlamps, and bug nets. We also were able to send each trip group with a go-pro to capture photos, footage, and reflections from on-trail.

Impact:

- 65 trip participants
- 7 school/youth organizations participated
- 11 trip groups (with a 9 person limit in the BWCA, a full trip group consists of 1 chaperone, 1-2 guides, and 6-7 students. The specific make-up varies across outfitting partners).
- Outfitting/camp partners included: YMCA Camp Menogyn, Wilderness Inquiry, Big City Mountaineers, Wilderness Canoe Base, and Spirit of the Wilderness. Outfitting partners were paired with groups on the criteria such transportation needs, date availability, and other support needed.
- Teacher chaperone evaluations of the trip: Document 6\_Trip Evaluation Chaperones
- Student evaluations of the trip: Document 7\_Trip Evaluation Student

Some of our favorite quotes from student evaluations included:

*"The trip is worth it all. Once it's the last day, you would wish the days were longer." Lai chia, grade 11*

*"This trip helped me discover a part of me I didn't know was there. The views were amazing and I enjoyed the work even though it was hard." Dominic, grade 11*

*"I gained a really genuine connection with many people." Lucy, grade 11*

*"It [the BWCA] is beautiful and needs to be preserved for as long as possible." Branton, grade 11*

*"I learned so much on this trip. Everything was so beautiful. I've never received so much positive affirmations of myself more than on this trip." Maya, grade 10*

As we near the end of 2022, we are already securing trip reservations for summer 2023. We have been floored by the increased interest from our 2022 partners in just one year. For example, Barnum High School sent only one trip last year with 5 students but already has 27 students signed up for a wait list for summer 2023. We believe this increased interest is a result of students sharing positive experiences as well as our involvement with these schools during fall programming. In addition to our previous partners, we have been able to identify several new school/organization partners through our fall programming for 2023 trips, and we look forward to reporting on the 2023 wilderness trips with our final report.

Local BWCA Day Trip Experiences:

From June 2022-August 2022, we held or participated in several family/community-focused events. During the summer of 2021, we planned BWCA Paddle Days as a way to reach students and their families from our partner schools and organizations due to the unpredictability of wilderness travel during the pandemic. We repeated these events this year as a way to involve families in our programming, deepen relationships with schools, and provide opportunities for students going on canoe trips to try out skills like paddling.

We worked with community partners such as Three Rivers and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board for these events. This summer, we held an event in the west metro geared towards our school partners in the Brooklyn Center area, as well as two events near Lake Hiawatha for our partners in the east metro area. We also held one for the first time in the Duluth area, partnering with Duluth Parks and Rec and UMD to provide additional activities. Activities for paddle days included canoeing, portaging, animal adaptations, firebuilding, and more.

We also participated in other partner activities, such as the Youth Outdoors Day in Alexandria, to reach hundreds of students from central Minnesota in a BWCA portaging activity.

#### Impact 2022:

- 84 participants
- Summer programming in Minneapolis, Maple Grove, Duluth
- Participants had an opportunity to enter a drawing by sharing highlights of their experience. Their responses can be found in Document 1\_Paddle Day Highlights.

#### **Final Report Between June 30th and August 15th 2023**

As we entered our second full summer of wilderness trips, we saw substantial growth in the program, both in our offerings in the preparation process and the interest and involvement of participants. In our 2023 trip season, 139 participants had overnight wilderness experiences, and 60 students had local day-trip experiences.

Our organization also deepened our role as liaison between our outfitters and our school or organization partners by adding in more connection points between the registration process and the trip. We already had trip information sessions at each school in place, as well as facilitating the registration process, holding a skills workshop before the trip, and conducting evaluations post-trip. To this process we added chaperone meetings with a plan for chaperones to follow (Document 6), a trip journal (Document 7) that would serve as a reflection and goal-setting tool for students on trail, a pre-trip survey (Document 8 and 9) (that also helped us to identify gear needs from the group, and we lent out personal gear such as rain coats, bug nets, and head lamps for students) to more accurately measure growth, and revising our post-trip survey (Document 10 and 11). Lastly, we revamped our workshops to include more packing demonstrations and paddling skills. All of these additional touchpoints serve us well as we deepened relationships with partners and such greater enrollment from schools.

In local BWCA day trips, we altered our calendar so that we could gather students back after their summer trips for paddle days geared towards alumni and their families, so we don't have additional BWCA Paddle Days to report on for this summer, but we did hold a program in the spring for a school that serves students ages 17-21 with special needs (Osseo Education Center). This group has been unable to do an overnight trip due to the care requirements currently needed by their population, but we were able to host a BWCA Paddle Day in lieu of an overnight trip with paddling, ecology, and orienting in partnership with Wilderness Inquiry. This event hosted 60 students.

#### Impact for trip season 2023:

- 136 trip participants, see Document 12 Trip Participant Log.
- 11 school/youth organizations participated, see Document 13 Trip Partner Profiles.
- 20 trip groups (with a 9-person limit in the BWCA, a full trip group consists of 1 chaperone, 1-2 guides, and 6-7 students. The specific make-up varies across outfitting partners).
- Outfitting/camp partners included: YMCA Camp Menogyn, Wilderness Inquiry, Big City Mountaineers, Wilderness Canoe Base, and Spirit of the Wilderness. Outfitting partners were paired with groups on the criteria such transportation needs, date availability, and other support needed.
- Chaperone pre and post evaluations of the trip: Documents 8 and 10.
- Student pre and post evaluations of the trip: Documents 9 and 11.
- Trip Journal that went on trail with each student – Document 7.
- 60 day-trip participants

Overall impact:

Looking back on this Activity as a whole, we are very pleased with the outcomes, especially considering the pivoting we had to do as we began this program during the height of the pandemic. Our outcomes not only point to providing 537 diverse and underserved students from around Minnesota to go on overnight or day trips, but the evaluation process and feedback from participants show us that students increased their outdoor skills, connection to the outdoors, and with each other. We also heard from teachers that they saw their students display leadership on trail. Between the pre-trip evaluation and the post trip evaluation, on average students felt more connected to nature after the trip and noted increased comfort in several outdoor skills. Some quotes from evaluations included:

*They should try [going to the Boundary Waters] because it builds teamwork and builds yourself. Being able to rely on your group and just being connected to nature is something everybody should try.*

*I saw all of my students grow in confidence. None of my students had paddled a canoe before and by the end 2 were very confident in sterning even in big waves. One of my students who is pretty quiet became something of a social butterfly by the end.*

*Going on this trip makes you realize that there is more to life than the city and your phone.*

*Swimming in the pure and unpolluted water was a great experience. Just seeing the purest form of nature was great.*

You can view the summary of the evaluations (Document 14), quotes (Document 15), and the full evaluations (Documents 8-11) attached to this report.

Though there were some changes made, for instance, we added several more outfitting partners because of capacity limitations at Camp Menogyn, and to meet the variety of needs that our school partners had with regards to transportation, group size, and the length and level of trip. Increasing our outfitting partners has made us more flexible to participant needs. We have also grown the number of schools and community partners engaged with in this part of our programming, which are reflected in the partner profiles below. Other changes included introducing local “BWCA Paddle Days” as a way of engaging students without a full overnight trip – this began as a COVID-19 adjustment but has become a valuable part of our program.

Our match dollars in this activity were spent on partial coverages for several Boundary Water trips, including Ely Community Resource day trips and overnight, Anoka High School, Fond du Lac, Osseo Day Trip, CLUES, the Mississippi Green Team trips.

Overall, these outcomes show that 537 students have had an immersive outdoor experience and have made a connection with a place that they would not otherwise have made. This impacts not only the future of the Boundary Waters as each year, there is a new class of future stewards who are now deeply connected to this place, but we’ve seen how it impacts the students themselves, increasing connection to each other, and increasing their confidence in the outdoors.

Total impact:

- 226 participants on overnight trips to the Boundary Waters (Documents 12-13)
- 20 trip groups
- Groups from 11 different organizations



- Outfitting/camp partners included: YMCA Camp Menogyn, Wilderness Inquiry, Big City Mountaineers, Wilderness Canoe Base, and Northern Tier. Outfitting partners were paired with groups on the criteria such transportation needs, date availability, and other support needed.
- Evaluations from 2022 and 2023 attached (Documents 8-11, 14-15)
- 311 day trip or paddle day participants
- Highlights from day trip participants attached (Document 17)

#### **IV. DISSEMINATION:**

##### **Description:**

Each year, the Education and Community Outreach Coordinator, in conjunction with the Project Manager, will collect quantitative and qualitative data for the project, including, but not limited to, the number of students reached in Activities 1 and 2, location and demographic data for participating schools and students, evaluation forms submitted by participating educators and students, and other information as desired.

In addition to the six updates to the LCCMR, information and updates regarding the project will be made available via the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness website (<https://www.friends-bwca.org>), e-newsletter, print newsletter, social media and Annual Report, as well as press releases to local media and public presentations at relevant community events.

The Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) will be acknowledged through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the ENRTF Acknowledgement Guidelines.

##### **First Update June 1, 2020**

We have been and plan to continue collecting data for both school program participants and trip participants, as well as evaluation forms for each. For classroom programs, the school, grade, number of students, school demographics, and percentage of students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch will be recorded. This information is gathered from the National Center for Education Statistics or school-recorded data when available. Students and teachers are sent a follow-up evaluation to complete after the visit.

For students applying for a wilderness scholarship, we collect this information via a scholarship application form. They indicate their ethnic background and Free and Reduced Lunch eligibility, as well as any other circumstances for which a scholarship is needed. Post-trip, students will be filling out an evaluation form at the conclusion of their trip. Their coordinating adult (either from the community group or the school), will distribute and return the evaluations. The chaperones and adult coordinators will also have an opportunity to fill out an evaluation and give feedback.

Other information on the program is available through our website, [www.friends-bwca.org](http://www.friends-bwca.org), where there is a separate page dedicated to this project at [www.friends-bwca.org/no-boundaries](http://www.friends-bwca.org/no-boundaries). This page provides information on the program, curriculum, state education standards, digital content, and how to get involved. We also have sent out a digital brochure to school district administrators with over 50% Free and Reduced Lunch in Minnesota. The Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) has been acknowledged on these communication resources through use of the trust fund logo and attribution language per the ENRTF Acknowledgement Guidelines.

We are exploring a digital curriculum platform that will combine these resources along with curriculum content to allow classrooms to access our content virtually in the event that direct school outreach is not advised.

### **Second Update December 1, 2020**

As our school outreach program has shifted to virtual, we've shifted to other models of tracking student involvement in our programs. In order to receive a copy of the link to the full online content, teachers are asked to fill out a form with information such as their school, grades taught, and number of students they expect to engage. With the understanding that some teachers may request the program and not use it, google analytics has also been installed on each unit page. Finally, teachers will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire at the end of the school year to indicate if they used the program and how many students were involved. This will also give us enough information to look up school demographic information and the Free and Reduced Lunch percentages of schools.

Outreach for this project has been done in several ways, and has been adjusted to fit the changing environments of schools and community groups. School outreach has been done through the virtual MEA conference, direct email outreach to teachers, as well as through building relationships with the Osprey Wild charter school network. These efforts have resulted in over 15 schools signing up for programs around the state. The program was also featured in an article in the Quetico Superior Newsletter, which can be found [here](#). This article generated interest not only in Minnesota, but in Wisconsin and Illinois as well.

We continue to update the [No Boundaries website](#) with new information on how to get involved in the program, and in all of our [online curriculum](#) and web pages the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) has been acknowledged on these communication resources through use of the trust fund logo and attribution language per the ENRTF Acknowledgement Guidelines.

For a full list of the schools and number of students engaged with the program so far, click [here](#).

### **Third Update June 1, 2021**

Since our last update, we are thrilled to operate with a new website here at the Friends. This has led to a more navigable education page, [No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters](#), where educators can find out more about our programs and how they can get involved.

We are also continually tracking the educators who sign up for No Boundaries programs, and following up with them about furthering their involvement with us to include outreach visits and wilderness trip opportunities, in addition to the online materials they already receive. You can view the [complete updated list here](#).

As mentioned above, we have sent out an end-of-year educator feedback form, and are already getting helpful responses. It is heartwarming to read how our programs have been of help to both teachers and students during such a difficult year. We look forward to including this information in full for the next update once the school year is closed and we have more complete responses.

For students who have applied for wilderness trip scholarships, their parent or guardian filled out an application and we were able to collect their school information, free and reduced lunch eligibility, their ethnic and racial background information, and any additional information they wanted to provide. All students who received a

scholarship were either from a racial or ethnic background underrepresented in the BWCA, qualified for F&RL, or had other qualifications of “underserved.” A full report on scholarship recipients and highlights from their camp experience this summer will be available on our next update.

For students and their families who attend the BWCA Day local to their communities, we will be recording numbers, school community, ages, and they can optionally identify their ethnic or racial background. We plan to collect stories of highlights and things people learned at these events through photos, written testimonials, and videos. Appropriate releases will all be in place. We look forward to presenting these stories in full for our next update.

#### **Fourth Update December 1, 2021**

Since our last update, the Friends have had the opportunity to collect many forms of data from our various programs. We’ve used this data to aid in outreach efforts and spread the word to encourage educators to sign up for our No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters Educator Network. Specifics on data collection and dissemination for each area of our programming is listed below.

*Educator Network:* Since our last update, the Friends have updated the Education portion of our website (found at [www.friends-bwca.org/outdoor-education](http://www.friends-bwca.org/outdoor-education)) to reflect the different ways teachers can engage with our materials and make it easier to sign up for our Educator Network. We also have developed a [course catalog packet](#) to provide schools and organizations with clear class offerings and ways to engage with our program.

When educators sign up for our No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters Educator Network, they receive an email series with all of our [online resources](#), as well as a course catalog for our school visits, and information on our trip program. In order to sign up, they provide us with information on their school, region, grades and classes taught, and the Free and Reduced Lunch percentage for their school. They also are able to indicate if they would like more information on any part of our programming. Our team can then follow up and provide more information and get them registered for a school visit. This year, we advertised the program with Facebook ads, and this proved to be very successful. We added over 150 educators to our network in just a month. We plan to continue to run Facebook ads during times of teacher planning, such as before each new semester. [You can find a full list of the No Boundaries Network here.](#)

*School Visits:* When schools sign up for a visit, they complete a form linked to our course catalog. We collect information such as the grade, class, and number of students, and the course they are registering for. Post-visit, we send schools a program evaluation and log all of the visit data, along with education statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics. Internally, we keep instructor reflections as well to continue to better the program. Attached to the email you will find a pdf of all of the students served outside of wilderness trips from spring of 2020 to current.

We also collect evaluation data from participating schools. Attached here is the [2020-2021 overall program feedback](#), and attached here is the [Fall 2021 Program Feedback](#) (sent after each program). We have used the data from the 2020-2021 to create an [impact page](#) that we can use for outreach purposes to new schools.

To continue to spread the word about the program, the Education and Communications departments at the Friends also worked together to systemize a media response for school visits, sending in summaries with quotes from the school and photos to local papers following the visits. The visit in Barnum, MN made the [Moose Lake paper](#), and a Duluth visit next week is set to be featured in the Duluth News Tribune.

*BWCA Local Day Trips “BWCA Days”*: Upon registration for our BWCA Family Days we collected the age range of participants and if this was their first time canoeing. We also collected participant highlights at each event, as well as photos. The registration information is below, as well as participant highlights. Also attached is a [photo page of some of the BWCA Day events.](#)

Grades 6-12 Students	Adults	Other youth (Grade 6 and below)	% of visitors canoeing for the first time
65	77	25	50%

**Highlights of participants:**

- Canoeing and helping paddle the canoe
- First time in 30 years canoeing. It was a breath taker! I was very scared at first. My boys and I didn't know how to canoe. I thought we would even make it to the water but we did it. It was super fun and the best experience ever!
- Paddling! The wind & water was so peaceful!
- Learning new tricks on the canoe.
- Joining something that was with my family.
- I learned that I like canoeing more than kayaking. Super fun!
- One highlight of the day was learning different canoe strokes. For the first time I learned how to put up a tarp. I was surprised that the draw stroke could turn the canoe so quickly.
- Canoeing was fun. I haven't canoed in years, and I learned some new strategies + techniques.
- Had a great time canoeing!
- I liked going fast in the canoe.
- I loved getting to paddle on this beautiful day! I was surprised by the difficulty of steering!
- I loved getting to paddle! Carrying a canoe was fun, too. So nice to spend the day outside canoeing with family.
- The funest thing was canoeing and holding the canoes!
- The bear bag and how high I could jump to get the bag in the tree.
- I liked canoeing & skull identification. I tried skull identification and it was fun!
- I truly enjoyed our time canoeing. We had Jeff guide us out in the water, and his expertise was fantastic to have during our time. Also loved Deb the wildlife station- learned a lot and so cool to have all the items.
- The canoeing.
- Getting cooled off in the water, paddling/canoing, and how tiring paddling was!
- Canoeing- very informative + Helpful!

*Wilderness Trips*: This past summer, due to COVID, students applying individually for scholarships. We had 27 students apply, 20 students registered, and 8 students went on trip experiences (due to fire cancellations). When students applied, we collected information from them. Students were approved for their indicated scholarship amount if they qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch, were students from a racial or ethnic background underrepresented in the BWCA (students who identify as BIPOC), or indicated another reason that they were requesting a scholarship. All of the information collected (with the exception of addresses, which have been removed for privacy and safety reasons) can be found on the PDF attached to the email with this update.

Several students chose to share a trip reflection upon completion of their trip - a reflection is posted below. We will share more stories and reflections in our final update.

*"I was nervous to meet new people and I had to get used to that all over again because of covid. But when I got there I wasn't the only one. A lot of others felt the same way. I ended up making great friends that helped with my anxiety and made the rest of my trip great. It was fun canoeing and setting up the tents. They always teach you how to do those things first before going on trail. I'm glad I [went on this trip] and hope to do it again."*

- Canoe Trip Participant, June 2021

### **Fifth Update June 1, 2022**

Since our last update, the Friends have had the opportunity to collect many forms of data from our various programs. We've used this data to aid in outreach efforts and spread the word to encourage educators to sign up for our No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters Educator Network. Specifics on data collection and dissemination for each area of our programming is listed below.

*Educator Network:* Since the last update, we have added 135 new educators to our network, with an estimated reach of 7,483 additional students added just this spring alone. Our staff routinely follows up with new educators to answer questions and get them involved in the different areas of programming. Teachers use the same sign up form described in the previous update to receive more information and automatically receive the online resources. Our outreach on social media towards teachers have been successful and during facebook ad campaigns are when we have the most teachers sign up. You can view the updated [No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters Educator Network here.](#)

*School programs:* We continue to collect feedback forms from teachers at the end of each school visit as well as logging the information described in our previous update. We have noticed that teachers have less time at the end of the school year to fill out evaluation forms, so we will begin to bring electronic devices such as ipads with us to programs so that teachers can fill them out at the program. We anticipate that this will help our response rate. As our programs have ramped up in the spring, we continue to communicate to local news sources on our program visits – we anticipate an article in the Ely Timberjay about our recent Adventure Day at Semer's Beach to be published in early June. Since our last update, our program was featured as the front-page story of the Duluth News Tribune, which we have included attached to the email.

A new addition to our outreach for school programs is a printed version of our [course catalog](#), which has been a great tool as we have begun participating at more in-person events and visits around the state. We intend to update this brochure with the new school year.

### *Trips*

Currently, we are in the process of getting students registered for their canoe trips. Our program makes a point to provide multiple touch-points throughout the fall so that we can get students questions answered, such as a trip information session early on at their school, and virtual Q&A with parents and guardians, often including our outfitting partner to answer any trip-specific questions. These multiple touchpoints, along with our trip preparation programs, allow for us to address questions, gear needs, and communication needs early on, which has greatly informed our program as we navigate different schools as well as different outfitting partners. The Friends also put together ["how-to" videos](#) that will aid in trip preparation for our groups.

Right now, students who are registered for trips with our outfitting partners are also completing our [Trips Questionnaire](#), so that we have an accurate picture of the group going on the trip. We intend on sending cameras with school groups this summer to document photos and videos from their trips. We also plan on having students and teachers share their stories and program reflections with us through a trip evaluation at the end of the summer. We look forward to sharing these with LCCMR in our next update.

**Sixth Update December 1 2022**

Since our last update, the Friends have had the opportunity to collect many forms of data from our various programs. We’ve used this data to aid in outreach efforts and spread the word to encourage educators to sign up for our No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters Educator Network. Specifics on data collection and dissemination for each area of our programming is listed below.

**Educator Network:**

The No Boundaries Educator Network refers to those who have signed up to access the online units and resources that can be used by the teacher in their own classroom, or by students individually. We connect via email newsletter to this network several times a year to let them know about new opportunities for school visits or resources. This past August, we advertised the network on social media and grew the No Boundaries Educator Network to 510 individuals. Those who sign up at the beginning of the school year often sign up for school visits, and some continue to become trip partners. When signing up for the network, we collect information such as their school, region, Free and Reduced Lunch %, and the number of students they intend to use the resources with. The full data can be found in Document 8\_No Boundaries Educator Network, and a summary of the Educator Network to date can be found below:

No Boundaries Educator Network 2019-December 2022

<b>Teachers in the Educator Network</b>	<b>Estimated student reach of teachers in network (teachers indicate how many students they plan to use the curriculum with)</b>	<b>Visits to online units as tracked by Google Analytics</b>	<b>Regions represented</b>
510	76,879 per school year	6,433	Metro, Southeast, Southwest, Central, Northeast, Northwest, Outside of Minnesota

**School Program:**

During our school program, we keep a detailed log of programs (Document 2\_No Boundaries Participant Log), including the school’s Free and Reduced Lunch %, as well as detailed demographic information provided by national education statistics. Shown below are highlights of the key information present in this log to date.

School Program Log 2019-December 2022

Number of students in programs	Program experiences provided (some students had more than one experience)	Serving youth from these cities:	Regions represented
4,765	5,648	St. Paul, Minneapolis, Barnum, Alexandria, Braham, Brooklyn Park, Baudette, Lake of the Woods, Fond Du Lac Reservation, Willow River, Cook, Keewatin, Bemidji, Osseo, Albertville, Apple Valley, Prior Lake, Duluth, Inver Grove Heights, Tower, Grand Rapids, Belgrade, Two Harbors, Clearbrook, Adams, Newport, Waconia, Ortonville, Owatonna, Clear Lake, Big Lake, Red Wing, Shevlin, Sauk Rapids, Jordan, Brook Park, SHEVLIN, Hutchinson, Woodbury, Ely, Edina, Albert Lea, Makinen, Monticello, Euclid, Hopkins, Pillager, Champlin.	Metro, Southeast, Southwest, Central, Northeast, Northwest

We also collect feedback forms from teachers after programming. The feedback on in-person programming to date can be found in Document 3: Teacher Evaluations. A few highlights from program feedback from 2021-2022 are:

- 100% of teachers surveyed indicated that they would recommend the program to others.
- 100% of teachers surveyed felt their students had an opportunity to positively engage with peers during this program.
- 93% of teachers surveyed felt their students were more likely to spend time outdoors as a result of the programming.
- 100% of teachers surveyed believed the program encouraged their students to make observations.
- 100% of teachers surveyed believed the program helped their students learn more about the natural world.
- 100% of teachers surveyed believed the program was inclusive to a wide range of experiences outdoors.

Some highlights teachers shared:

- *“The hands-on activities and teambuilding skills are what students need more of in school.”*
- *“It was just a great feeling seeing my students being engaged during the whole lesson: listening intently to the instructors’ discussion of the BWCA, collaborating on the packets and Venn diagrams, etc. BUT the magic happened when we got outside. My students were FULLY engaged and analyzing trees with great precision. They loved it.”*
- *“It was great to see the kids get a canoe up on their shoulders. Many of them (almost all) have never done that. It was an experience I’m glad I got to see.”*
- *“All of the students were able to guess the origin of the skull that they had at their table from the resource materials provided. I was amazed by this. They were working collaboratively with one another*



*and enjoying the experience, which also made the Skull Exploration Course totally worthwhile. Most definitely will have the Friends of the Boundary Waters back again next year for our Amazing Animal Enrichment Class experience.”*

**Wilderness Trips:**

On Wilderness Trips this year, we collected information at the school level (Document 4\_Trip Partner Profiles), as well as at the individual level (Document 5\_Trip Participant 2022), such as demographic information, and Free and Reduced Lunch. Highlights of key information to date are shown below:

**Wilderness Trips 2019-2022**

<b>Participants on a wilderness trip</b>	<b>Schools / organizations represented</b>	<b>Cities represented</b>
73	CLUES, Ely Community Resource, Noble Academy, Prairie Seeds Academy, Barnum High School, Belgrade High School, St Peter Claver	Minneapolis, St. Paul, Ely, Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, Barnum, Belgrade, Brooten, Elrosa

We also collect information through post-trip evaluations for both the teacher attending as well as the students on the trip. You can find the full responses in documents 6 and 7, and some quotes from the evaluations are featured below.

- 100% of chaperones indicated that they saw their students gain confidence and work as a team during the week.
- *“This trip helped me discover a part of me I didn't know was there. The views were amazing and I enjoyed the work even though it was hard.” Dominic, grade 11*
- *“I gained a really genuine connection with many people.” Lucy, grade 11*
- *“I learned so much on this trip. Everything was so beautiful. I've never received so much positive affirmations of myself more than on this trip.” Maya, grade 10*
- *“It was heartwarming to see the impact this trip had on the kiddos and the growth I saw in all of the kiddos' wilderness skills as well as their confidence, self-awareness, empathy, and the lasting bonds they built together. “ Chaperone on Ely Community Resource Trip*

Additionally, we loaned each wilderness trip group a go-pro with video and photo reflection prompts. We loved being able to see a glimpse into their trips.

**Local BWCA Experiences:**

With the uncertainty of the pandemic, we also shifted to offer BWCA Paddle Day experiences close to our partners as a backup if wilderness trips were not possible. The numbers for these events 2019-2022 are below:

<b>Participants in BWCA Paddle Days</b>	<b>Locations of Paddle Days</b>
226	Minneapolis, St. Paul, Maple Grove, Duluth

**Media:**



Throughout the year, we look for opportunities to connect with local media to highlight the program and our partners around Minnesota. We always include the LCCMR acknowledgment language in the information we pass along to media outlets, though occasionally they publish without including it. Here are some of the examples of the No Boundaries program in the news since our last update:

- [TimberJay](#)
- [Bemidji](#),
- [Prior Lake](#),
- [Eagan](#)

**Final Report Between June 30th and August 15th 2023**

Our [updated website](#) provides information for teachers, including [online resources](#), a [course catalog](#) (Document 17), and information on [MN State Standards](#). We also created a [brochure](#) (Document 18) for use at events. Teachers are encouraged to sign up for the [Educator Network](#), which provides them with resources as well as newsletters throughout the year. Trip resources also include [“how-to” videos](#).

To inform the general public about our program, throughout the duration of the project, we invited local newspapers to cover our programs, and [several pieces](#) (Document 19) were published throughout Minnesota. We highlight our school visits and wilderness trip groups on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and created a [video](#) (Document 20) to share with teachers and the general public.

Throughout the duration of our project, we also tracked our engagement within the program through our Teacher Network (Doc. 5), Program Participant Log (Doc. 2), and our Trip Participant Log (Document 12). For all direct engagement we sent feedback forms to gather more information on how our programs were being used, as well as feedback on potential growth areas. For school visits, teachers completed a program feedback form, and for wilderness trips, students and chaperones each completed a pre and post survey. These surveys allowed us to measure the impact of their experience in ways like confidence in outdoor skills, relationships with peers, and how connected they felt to the outdoors. All feedback form responses are attached to the final report.

**V. ADDITIONAL BUDGET INFORMATION: N/A**

**A. Personnel and Capital Expenditures**

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000:**

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:**

**Total Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation:**

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: 7,072	Divide total personnel hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: 3.4
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**Total Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation:**

Enter Total Estimated Contract Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: 1248	Divide total contract hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: .6
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**VI. PROJECT PARTNERS:**

**A. Partners outside of project manager’s organization receiving ENRTF funding:** N/A

**B. Partners outside of project manager’s organization NOT receiving ENRTF funding:** YMCA’s Camp Menogyn, Wilderness Inquiry, Wilderness Canoe Base, Northern Tier, Big City Mountaineers, and Spirit of the Wilderness have partnered with us in implementing Activity 2.

**VII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

- Project status update reports will be submitted June 1 and December 1 each year of the project.
- A final report and associated products will be submitted August 15, 2023.

**VIII. SEE ADDITIONAL WORK PLAN COMPONENTS:**

- A. Budget Spreadsheet** - see Attachment A
- B. Visual Component or Map** - see attached
- C. Parcel List Spreadsheet** - N/A
- D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements** - N/A
- E. Research Addendum** - N/A

**Attachment A:**

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund**

**M.L. 2019 Budget Spreadsheet**

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 05b

**Project Manager:** Chris Knopf

**Project Title:** Connecting Over 6,500 Students to the Boundary Waters

**Organization:** Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

**Project Budget:** \$450,000

**Project Length and Completion Date:** Three and 2/3 years; Completion Date: June 30th, 2023 with project report by August 15th

**Today's Date:** March 14, 2024



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET		Budget Approved 8/15/2023	Amount Spent	Balance
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>				
<b>Personnel (Wages and Benefits)</b>		\$ 268,432	\$ 268,432	\$ -
Education and Community Outreach Coordinator: .8FTE x 3.66 years at \$71,232 salary = \$208,566.44				\$ -
Program Coordinator: .8FTE X 49,000 + benefits X 1 year = 44,100				\$ -
Program Assistant: : .15 FTE X 3 years at \$35,034 = \$15,765.56				\$ -
<b>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts</b>				\$ -
Viedography professionals for editing and content creation within the digital curriculum. 100 hours at 100/hour = \$10,000		\$ 5,238	\$ 5,238	\$ -
GIS professionals for digital curriculum build and upkeep. 200 hours at \$15/hour = \$3000		\$ 1,780	\$ 1,780	\$ -
Program Associates (independent contractors selected competitively) to assist with recruiting and preparing students for Boundary Waters Canoe trips		\$ 12,182	\$ 12,182	\$ -
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies</b>				\$ -
Educational program materials for classroom program use.		\$ 12,997	\$ 12,997	\$ -
Food for day trip program participants (\$15/person for 1,000 participants).		\$ 5,728	\$ 4,906	\$ 822
Boundary Waters canoe trip outdoor clothing for students of extreme financial need (\$200/student x 100 students = \$20,000)		\$ 13,865	\$ 13,865	\$ -
<b>Capital Expenditures Over \$5,000</b>				\$ -
N/A			\$ -	\$ -
<b>Fee Title Acquisition</b>				\$ -
N/A			\$ -	\$ -
<b>Easement Acquisition</b>				\$ -
N/A			\$ -	\$ -
<b>Professional Services for Acquisition</b>				\$ -
N/A			\$ -	\$ -
<b>Printing</b>				\$ -
Educational program materials for classroom use \$1/student x 6480 students = \$6480		\$ 821	\$ 821	\$ -
Program materials for students on Boundary Waters canoe trips (\$5/student x 250		\$ 1,770	\$ 1,770	\$ -
<b>Travel expenses in Minnesota</b>				\$ -
Travel to Minnesota schools (18 school visits/year x 3 years x 275 miles/visit x .545		\$ 7,993	\$ 7,993	\$ -
Staff food and lodging for overnight stays for visits to schools in Greater Minnesota (24 overnight stays over years x \$125 = \$3,000)		\$ 3,900	\$ 3,900	\$ -
<b>Other</b>				\$ -
BWCA "local" day trip experiences: paddling, portaging, and other BWCA skills and activities in areas near the organization for student and/or household groups. (10 events X \$1000 per event).		\$ 3,434	\$ 3,434	\$ -
Scholarships: for 200 students (grades 6-12) to experience a multi-day canoe trip in the Boundary Waters ( 200 students x \$700/student =140,000		\$ 111,860	\$ 111,860	\$ -
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>		\$ 450,000	\$ 449,178	\$ 822
<b>OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT</b>				
	<b>Status (secured</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Spent</b>	<b>Balance</b>
<b>Non-State:</b> Individual donations and foundation grants to support the multi-day Boundary Waters canoe wilderness trips. (estimated)		\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	\$ -
Secured				
<b>State:</b>		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>In kind:</b> Additional staff support from the Executive Director and Northern		\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000	\$ -
Secured				
<b>PAST AND CURRENT LEGAL APPROPRIATIONS</b>				
	<b>Amount legally</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Spent</b>	<b>Balance</b>
<b>Current appropriation:</b>		\$ 450,000	\$ 449,178	\$ 822
<b>Past appropriations:</b>		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -