



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2026 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2026-399

Staff Lead: Michael Varien

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: May 20, 2026

Project Title: Wolf Monitoring on the Leech Lake Reservation

Project Budget: \$295,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Tanya Roerick

Organization: Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

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Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: June 17, 2026

Reporting Schedule: April 1 / October 1 of each year.

Project Completion: June 30, 2029

Final Report Due Date: August 14, 2029

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2026, Chp. 104, Sec. 2, Subd. 06j

Appropriation Language: \$295,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe to monitor and assess wolf population dynamics and update a wolf management plan to guide collaboration with other natural resource agencies for the long-term survival of wolves on the Leech Lake Reservation.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2029

Narrative

Project Summary: We will monitor and assess wolf population dynamics to update our wolf management plan, collaborate with other agencies, and ensure the long-term survival of wolves on the Leech Lake Reservation.

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

Gray wolves are of great cultural and spiritual importance to the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (LLBO). They were once extirpated from most of their range, but have recovered once they were listed under the Endangered Species Act. During that time, they have been delisted and relisted multiple times, but have remained a listed species on the Band's Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species List. As we collaborate with the MNDNR and other Tribes on wolf management we have found we need more information about wolves residing on/near the Leech Lake Reservation to make the best management decisions. The proposed project requests funds to continue wolf monitoring for LLBO. This project was first initiated in 2023 and was funded by a Tribal Wildlife Grant from USFWS and BIA. The first few years of the project have provided us a foundation to build upon for our wolf monitoring needs. We are now looking to continue and expand the project to enable us to assess wolf population dynamics, update our wolf management plan, collaborate more effectively with MNDNR, other agencies and stakeholders, and ensure the long-term survival of wolves on the Leech Lake Reservation.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.

We propose collaring wolves to monitor and assess various aspects of wolf population dynamics. USDA Wildlife Services will assist us with the captures and collaring. During immobilizations we will collect various morphological measurements and biological samples (blood, hair, etc.). The data from the GPS collars will provide valuable information on wolf movement to assess spatial use, territories, and mortality. We will also use the GPS collar data to locate den sites. Den sites will be visited to assess den characteristics and to collar pups to monitor pup survival. Additionally, we will use trail cameras and aerial surveys to further assess pack sizes and wolf density. This information will allow us to more effectively collaborate with other natural resource agencies on wolves and provide us valuable information on wolves in our area. Federal permits have already been obtained for this work.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

This project will provide valuable information on wolves for their continued protection and conservation. By continuing and expanding our current wolf monitoring project we will learn more about various aspects of wolf population dynamics such as wolf density, spatial use, survival, and reproduction. This information will help us protect den and rendezvous sites during forest management activities, contribute towards updating our 2012 Wolf Management Plan, contribute to other Tribal wolf monitoring efforts, collaborate more effectively with MNDNR and other agencies and stakeholders, and ensure the long-term existence of wolves on the Leech Lake Reservation.

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

County(s): Cass, Hubbard, Itasca, Beltrami,

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

County(s): Cass, Hubbard, Beltrami, Itasca,

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Wolf Monitoring

Activity Budget: \$274,703

Activity Description:

Wolf monitoring will consist of capturing and collaring wolves, monitoring their movements through the GPS collars, identifying den and rendezvous sites from adult wolf collar locations, collaring wolf pups, monitoring wolf pups, putting out trail cameras to help assess pack size, conducting aerial surveys to obtain pack counts, and monitoring for mortalities. Because we are building off of our current project monitoring can start immediately. We will capture and collar adult wolves with the assistance of USDA Wildlife Services with the use of foot hold traps (spring/summer) and snares (winter). Wolves will be immobilized, collared, ear tagged, have various morphological measurements and biological samples (blood, hair, etc.) taken. GPS collars will allow us to track the wolves/collars in "real" time and identify den and rendezvous sites and other areas of interest. Den sites will be visited to assess den characteristics and to collar pups. Pups will then be monitored to assess survival in their first few months of life. Trail cameras (primarily leaf-off period) and aerial surveys (winter) will be used to determine pack size throughout the year. Mortalities will be investigated year round. We have already obtained a federal permit for the proposed work.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Trail cameras established and moved around within pack territories during leaf-off period each year	March 31, 2029
Conduct aerial pack count surveys each winter	March 31, 2029
Den Checks in 2027, 2028, & 2029	June 30, 2029
Capture and collar approximately 30 adult wolves throughout life of this project	June 30, 2029

Activity 2: Data Assessment/Reporting

Activity Budget: \$20,297

Activity Description:

Data from the wolf GPS collars will be used to assess various aspects of wolf population dynamics. This includes wolf pack size, territories, densities within the Leech Lake Reservation, and spatial use. Additionally we will assess wolf den site characteristics and pup survival. These milestones will be completed annually. For an example, den data will be assessed following wolf denning season. The completion date represents when we expect to complete the last assessment/analysis.

We will provide biannual reports and a final report of our project. Additionally, results from this project will be used to help us update our 2012 Wolf Management Plan and collaborate with partners. We anticipate some data such as den and rendezvous sites will be used to guide forest management with the Chippewa National Forest and MN DNR. We also anticipate results from this project will be valuable and beneficial when collaborating with MN DNR and other agencies.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Completed wolf collar data assessment	March 31, 2029
Completed wolf den and pup data assessment	May 31, 2029
Completion of data analysis on various aspects of wolf population dynamics	May 31, 2029
Updated wolf management plan	June 30, 2029

Dissemination

Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.

We plan to share our project through several way. First, data and information gathered from this project will help us to update our wolf management plan, which would be shared and available to MN DNR, USFWS, other Tribes, and natural resource agencies. Secondly, the DRM Wildlife Program usually takes part in several community outreach events every year. At these events we will plan to have information available about wolves and our project. Additionally, through other funding we host a Ma'iingan in the Moonlight event annually. This event takes youth to the International Wolf Center and North American Bear Center in Ely, MN. As part of this event we will incorporate information about our wolf project. Furthermore, we are often involved with presentations with the International Wolf Center and other organizations. If these opportunities present themselves again we will share our project with them and their community. Lastly, we often attend conferences with other natural resources professionals and hope to share our project with them at these types of events.

Some of the data collected in this project is sensitive data and can not be shared with the public. This will be at the digression of the Leech Lake Division of Resource Management and Leech Lake Tribal Council.

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund 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 Acknowledgment Guidelines.

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?

The results of this project will help us update our 2012 Wolf Management Plan and guide forest management activities. Additionally, data and information gained from this project will help us to better collaborate with other agencies on wolf management because we will know more about wolf population dynamics on the Leech Lake Reservation, which is data we and our partners did not previously have. Any additional work needed will be completed by our staff. Our plan is for this to be a long-term wolf monitoring project and we will seek additional funding as needed for this project.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Wildlife Program Director/Lead Biologist		Will oversee project as well as capture and collar wolves, conduct den checks, investigate mortalities, monitor wolves, assess data, and write reports.			30%	0.51		\$47,202
Wildlife Specialist/Technician		Will assist with den checks, conduct wolf pup mortality checks, investigate mortalities, assist with aerial surveys, and establish and maintain trail cameras			30%	0.57		\$35,611
							Sub Total	\$82,813
Contracts and Services								
USDA Wildlife Services	Service Contract	Wildlife Services will provide staff and equipment to capture and collar wolves each year of the project.				0		\$50,000
Plane or Helicopter	Service Contract	A small plane or helicopter will be contracted to conduct aerial wolf surveys to obtain wolf pack counts over a 3 year period. If a helicopter crew is used they may assist with wolf captures.				0		\$25,000
							Sub Total	\$75,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Field Supplies	Supplies to immobilize and process wolves. This includes items like needles, syringes, pit tags, ear tags, ear tagger, etc.					\$3,500
	Equipment	GPS Collars - approximately 30-35	This is the total cost for approximately 30-35 GPS collars for adult wolves. Current collars cost about \$2800, but each year the costs increase. This includes collar data fees.					\$100,000
	Equipment	Wolf Pup Collars - approximately 90 collars	Wolf pup collars allow us to monitor the pups weekly or more frequently to determine if a mortality occurs.					\$20,000

			At a cost of approximately \$215 per collar we will be able to purchase enough collars to use over the 3 years of this project. This will be critical in assessing wolf pup survival.					
	Equipment	Trail Cameras - 50	Trail cameras will provide us valuable data to assess the number of individuals in a pack. At an estimated cost of \$130 per trail camera our goal is to establish 10 cameras in each packs territory to assess pack numbers and composition. We have approximately 40 trail cameras already so purchasing these will allow us to cover more packs/area.					\$6,500
	Tools and Supplies	Trail Camera Supplies	Supplies to keep trail cameras operational such as rechargeable batteries, battery charging stations, SD cards, and locks for trail cameras.					\$7,187
							Sub Total	\$137,187
	Capital Equipment							
							Sub Total	-
	Acquisitions and Stewardship							
							Sub Total	-
	Travel In Minnesota							
							Sub Total	-
	Travel Outside Minnesota							
							Sub Total	-
	Printing and Publication							
							Sub Total	-
	Other Expenses							

							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$295,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
In-Kind	Tribal	We anticipate we may need additional supplies, fuel for vehicles, and additional staff time on the project to help with certain aspects of the project. This is an estimate of what we anticipate contributing as in-kind, but may change based on the needs of the project.	Potential	\$15,000
In-Kind	Tribal	40 existing trail cameras to use towards this project	Secured	\$4,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$19,000
			Funds Total	\$19,000

Total Project Cost: \$314,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [ac052ff8-547.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

This project is located on the Leech Lake Reservation in Minnesota. A large portion of the Reservation overlaps with the Chippewa National Forest and is co-managed by both the Tribe and National Forest. Other landowners within the Reservation boundary include Tribal land, Minnesota DNR, four counties, and private landowners....

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Letter from Leech Lake Tribal Council Supporting Proposal	e40e0b60-cfe.pdf
LCCMR Wolf Monitoring Proposal Letter... Received 03-26-2025	da69e3e5-11f.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
2024 Annual Wolf Report	2c6d11f1-36b.pdf
2023 Annual Wolf Report	efa79b39-2d9.pdf
Addendum for LCCMR Proposal 2026-399_Final	d1dc53e8-ed9.docx

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Under Activities and Milestones in Activity 2 I revised the sentence stating "We will provide annual reports and a final report of our project." to instead state biannual reports would be provided to fit our reporting requirement for this funding.

Updated the number of cameras we currently own to put towards project from 15 to 40. This also increased our in-kind of Non-ENTRF funds. Also, added that collar fees are included in the amount requested for collars to line up with our research addendum.

No other changes have been made.

Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?

N/A

Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

N/A

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

Yes

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?

No

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?

No

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this project:

None.

Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements

Yes, I understand