

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2017 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

---

**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 091-C**

Connecting Minnesota's Youth to Voyageurs National Park

---

**Category:** C. Environmental Education

---

**Total Project Budget:** \$ 90,600

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 3 years, July 2017 - June 2020

**Summary:**

This project addresses the lack of access to and awareness of Minnesotas Voyageurs National Park through an integrated suite of distance learning, classroom and park-based environmental education programs.

---

**Name:** Christina Hausman

**Sponsoring Organization:** Voyageurs National Park Association

**Address:** 126 Third St N, Ste 400  
Minneapolis MN 55401

**Telephone Number:** (612) 333-5424

**Email** chausman@voyageurs.org

**Web Address** www.voyageurs.org

---

**Location**

**Region:** Statewide

**County Name:** Hennepin, Koochiching, Ramsey, St. Louis

**City / Township:**

---

**Alternate Text for Visual:**

Flow chart of program resources, activities, outputs and impact.

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ TOTAL	_____ %



**PROJECT TITLE: Connecting Minnesota’s Youth to Voyageurs National Park**

**I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

Amongst the National Park Service's greatest strengths are its education and interpretive programs and the setting parks provide as amazing outdoor classrooms. However, due to federal budget constraints, Minnesota’s Voyageurs National Park has been unable to offer these services to Minnesota students beyond the borders of the park in St. Louis and Koochiching Counties. As a result, kids across the state are missing out on opportunities to explore and learn about our state’s only National Park. By bringing Voyageurs to kids and kids to Voyageurs, we can increase awareness of and access to the park for a younger, more diverse, group of Minnesotans in order to promote public lands and conservation issues amongst the next generation of environmental stewards.

In order to strengthen education and awareness, Voyageurs National Park Association proposes a three-pronged approach led by an Environmental Education Specialist working out of the Voyageurs National Park headquarters in International Falls. The program will rest on three major pillars.

- (1) A web-based virtual ranger program will be developed to reach classrooms across the state with environmental and stewardship themed teleconference style lessons led by the Education Specialist. Virtual Ranger programs already exist in many National Parks and this model is ideal given Voyageurs’ remote location. In addition to live ranger led lessons, several educational videos will be accessible online.
- (2) Classroom outreach efforts across the state will be bolstered through the addition of the Education Specialist, a team of 10 “Volunteer Outreach Educators” and the inclusion of an annual teacher credit workshop. Volunteers will be Voyageurs National Park Association members and will be located in Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth where they will conduct classroom presentations covering existing curriculum from the park’s mobile “Teacher Trunks.” The Educational Interpreter, staffed out of the International Falls, will lead outreach efforts in northern St. Louis and Koochiching Counties, presenting to classrooms in addition to facilitating an annual teacher credit workshop where educators from around the state will receive training regarding Voyageurs themed lessons in compliance with state education standards. “Teacher Trunks” will also be available to educators through a statewide loan program.
- (3) Experiential park programs allow students to visit Voyageurs firsthand. These will be improved through the addition of the Education Specialist who will promote, facilitate and support any field trips to the park. The National Park Teen Ambassador program also engages a diverse group of Minnesota high school students through intensive multi-day camping adventures in Voyageurs National Park and on the Mississippi River. During their camping trips students develop wilderness skills, explore resource management careers and learn about environmental conservation before presenting their trips to their peers. The program is offered free of cost and serves primarily economically disadvantaged youth in college preparatory programs.

**II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

**Activity 1:** The web-based virtual ranger provides distance-learning lessons statewide. **Budget: \$24,900**

Virtual Ranger programs bring the environmental interpretation ranger into classrooms and libraries statewide to deliver environmental education, MN history and conservation lessons via a digital web based platform.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Educators in all 87 MN counties are notified of the program’s availability.	Nov. 30, 2017
2. A minimum of 7 brief educational videos are available on VNPA’s website.	Dec. 31, 2017
3. A minimum of 7,000 students are reached via web based presentations. (340 classrooms)	Jun. 30, 2020

**Activity 2:** Classroom outreach is expanded in schools across the state of Minnesota. **Budget: \$20,300**



**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)**

**2017 Main Proposal**

**Project Title: *Connecting Minnesota’s Youth to Voyageurs National Park***

The Environmental Education Specialist increases visits to local schools and facilitates teacher credit workshops while volunteer outreach educators present Voyageurs-themed lessons to classes in Duluth and the Twin Cities.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. 1,000 (50 classrooms) students view Environmental Specialist led classroom lessons.	Jun. 30, 2020
2. 2,500 students (120 classrooms) are reached by “Volunteer Educator” presentations.	Jun. 30, 2020
3. 150 teachers receive state standards compliant training during teacher credit workshops.	Jun. 30, 2020

**Activity 3: Facilitate student trips to Voyageurs.**

**Budget: \$45,400**

The Environmental Education Specialist promotes and facilitates experiential park programs that provide hands-on learning and stewardship for students at the park

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. 4,800 kids experience Voyageurs firsthand through youth group and classroom field trips.	Jun. 30, 2020
2. 90 students complete National Park Teen Ambassador program.	Jun. 30, 2020
3. 1,800 students receive environmental messaging through Teen Ambassador presentations.	Jun. 30, 2020

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

Voyageurs National Park Association, the National Park Service and Wilderness Inquiry will receive LCCMR funds to conduct project activities. Other partners not receiving funding include Koochiching, St. Louis Counties and Twin Cities area schools.

**B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy**

Each year, Voyageurs receives requests for interpretive programs from teachers that go unanswered due to capacity shortfalls. Not only will this project allow the park to respond to these requests, it will ensure that students from schools across the state benefit from hands-on lessons covering everything from Ojibwe traditions, to the fur trade, to geology, ecology, climate change and environmental conservation. At its core, this project seeks to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards by engaging a younger, more diverse set of individuals with Voyageurs National Park. Over the project’s three-year lifespan a minimum of 17,190 students and 150 teachers will be introduced to Voyageurs National Park and the many conservation stories it helps illustrate. Moreover, if each of those teachers instructs even one average sized Minnesota classroom regarding Voyageurs, the project will reach another 3,000 students bringing the total number of students served above 20,000.

Moving beyond 2020, the establishment of the virtual ranger program, engagement of volunteer educators, accreditation of teachers and consolidation of curriculum into customizable “Teacher Trunks” will provide the institutional infrastructure necessary to ensure that Voyageurs National Park is able to maintain its environmental education efforts with minimal external support. After this three-year period, we will seek to further improve our methods and increase the number of youth we reach within Minnesota, expand some program to outside of the state and build the case for additional federal programming to support these activities in the long-term.

**C. Timeline Requirements**

This request would support a three-year period with project commencement on July 1, 2017 and conclusion on June 30, 2020.

## 2017 Detailed Project Budget

**Project Title:** Connecting Minnesota's Youth to Voyageurs National Park

### IV. TOTAL ENRTE REQUEST BUDGET 3 years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u> (See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses", p. 13)	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<b>Personnel:</b> <b>Environmental Education Specialist:</b> 50% Full Time: 3 years: \$32,000 salary & benefits annually <b>Program Guides:</b> 100% Part Time: 3 Wilderness Inquiry guides annually at \$3,167 each	\$ 76,500
<b>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:</b> NA	\$ -
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> <b>Distance Learning Equipment:</b> \$8,000 based on estimates from other parks <b>Teacher Credit Workshop:</b> \$1,000 for materials	\$ 9,000
<b>Travel:</b> <b>Envirmental Education Specialist Mileage:</b> \$0.54 /mile for ~ 600 miles from the park to VNPA HQ twice annually for Education Interpreter for 3 years <b>Envirmental Education Specialist Per Diem:</b> \$89/night + \$51/Meals (\$38.25 on 1st and last days) for EEI for 2 nights at VNPA HQ annually for 3 years <b>Teacher Credit Workshop:</b> 2,400 Rainy Lake Experiential Learning Tour	\$ 5,100
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST</b>	<b>\$ 90,600</b>

### V. OTHER FUNDS (This entire section must be filled out. Do not delete rows. Indicate "N/A" if row is not applicable.)

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
<b>Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b> <b>National Park Service:</b> \$48,000 for Environmental Education Interpreter <b>National Park Service:</b> \$2,000 for printing & "Teacher Trunks" <b>Voyageurs National Park Association</b> \$14,200 for Teen Ambassadors & volunteer support <b>Wilderness Inquiry:</b> \$14,400 in Financial Aid <b>Family Foundation:</b> \$12,000 for the Teen Ambassador Program	\$ 90,600	Secured Secured Secured Secured Secured Secured
<b>Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b> <b>ENRTF (LCCMR):</b> Wilderness Inquiry offers annual financial aid package of \$4,800 for the Teen Ambassador Program based on their LCCMR funding (VNPA does not receive ENRTF funding at this time)	\$ 14,400	Secured
<b>In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Natonal</b></span> <b>Park Service:</b> Rangers supply \$4,600 in support hours to Teen Ambassadors annually <b>National Park Service:</b> NPS supplies \$700 of in kind transportation support to Teen Ambassadors annually	\$ 15,900	Secured Secured
<b>Funding History:</b> Indicate funding secured but to be expended prior to July 1, 2016, for activities directly relevant to this specific funding request, including past and current ENRTF funds. State specific source(s) of fund and dollar amount.	\$ -	
<b>Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation:</b> \$4,050 in Financial Aid from Wilderness Inquiry funded through 2015 ENRTF funds have been allocated to the 2016 Teen Ambassador Program.	\$ 4,800	Legally Obligated





## Connecting Minnesota's Youth to Voyageurs National Park

### Resources

- Environmental Education Specialist
- Funding from National Park Service, LCCMR, VNPA and partners
- National Park Service's existing curriculum, resources, facilities and programs
- Network of volunteers and partners

### Activities

- Establish new distance learning program (virtual park ranger)
- Expand experiential programs at Voyageurs National Park
- Expand in-person classroom outreach - bringing the park to the students

### Outputs

- A minimum of 7,000 students are reached via virtual ranger programs (340 classrooms)
- 4,800 kids experience Voyageurs firsthand through youth group and classroom field trips
- 3,500 students reached through in-person classroom presentations

### Impact

- A younger, more diverse audience of Minnesotans is connected to Voyageurs National Park and the many conservation lessons it can illustrate as an outdoor or virtual classroom
- Enhancement of public education, awareness, and understanding of Minnesota's Voyageurs National Park throughout the state
- Environmental education in classrooms throughout the state is augmented by the rich history and ecology of Voyageurs National Park



**Voyageurs National Park Association**  
**Connecting Minnesota's Youth to Voyageurs National Park**

**I. PROJECT MANAGER**

Christina Hausman, Executive Director  
Voyageurs National Park Association

Christina Hausman has been the executive director of Voyageurs National Park Association since July 2013. She engages advocates, partners, donors, volunteers and youth on behalf of Minnesota's Voyageurs National Park. Christina has over nine years experience working in the nonprofit industry and has previously worked for The Nature Conservancy and the Hennepin County Health Foundation.

Christina leads Voyageurs National Park Association in coordinating with partners at the nonprofit, local, state and federal government levels. She works with regional partnerships like the Heart of the Continent Partnership and national partnerships like the Friends Alliance for National Parks. Her principle qualification to oversee this project is derived from her partnership background, vision and ability to coordinate federal, state, and NGO resources for successful environmental projects and programming. She helped establish the National Park Teen Ambassador program and has a four-year history working with the National Park Service at Voyageurs National Park on environmental education.

**II. ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION**

**Voyageurs National Park Association (VNPA)**

Voyageurs National Park Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota. For over fifty years, our mission has been the protection and promotion of the natural, recreational, and historic resources of Voyageurs National Park.

Voyageurs National Park Association serves as Voyageurs' leading voice for both protection and promotion of its resources, and as a partner with the National Park Service in empowering park stewards, implementing special projects with financial and volunteer support, and working together to preserve the visitor experience and wild nature of the park for future generations. VNPA counts over 450 Minnesota households as members.

VNPA has a proven track record of success. Voyageurs National Park Association has helped to:

- Establish Minnesota's only national park, Voyageurs National Park, permanently protecting the lands and waters in the Rainy, Kabetogama, Namakan, and Sand Point Lakes region of northern Minnesota for current and future generations to enjoy.
- Conserve an additional 64 total acres of land within the park's boundaries.
- Empower over 70 Minnesota high school students through the National Park Teen Ambassador program.
- Recruit hundreds of volunteers to complete special projects in the park for the past 10 years.
- Monitor environmental threats to the park's natural resources and advocate to protect it.
- Educate the public about Voyageurs National Park and celebrate its importance through events, presentations, educational materials, visitor guides and an annual Congressional briefing event.
- Connect over 2,600 elementary and high school students to the park through school field trip grants.
- Launch a multi-partner, large-scale wetland restoration effort.
- Create the *Minnesota National Parks Legacy* film for teachers to use throughout Minnesota.
- Grant funds to the park to support projects like educational programs, wildlife research, and habitat and trail restoration.