

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2019 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 252-G

National Loon Center: State Bird Survival and Protection

Category: G. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Sub-Category:

Total Project Budget: \$ 4,000,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: June 30, 2021 (2 yrs)

Summary:

National Loon Center dedicated to survival of loon, habitat protection, recreation, and environmental research establishing Minnesota as the premiere destination to experience the freshwater ecosystem we share with native wildlife.

Name: Leah Heggerston

Sponsoring Organization: National Loon Center Foundation

Title: VP National Loon Center Foundation

Department: _____

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Web Address www.nationallooncenter.org

Location

Region: Central

County Name: Crow Wing

City / Township: Crosslake/Brainerd Lakes Area

Alternate Text for Visual:

Location of proposed National Loon Center, concept images of the trail, public docks, and interactive exhibits in the facility. Please visit nationallooncenter.org and click on "LCCMR Video" to learn more.

| | | | |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| _____ Funding Priorities | _____ Multiple Benefits | _____ Outcomes | _____ Knowledge Base |
| _____ Extent of Impact | _____ Innovation | _____ Scientific/Tech Basis | _____ Urgency |
| _____ Capacity | _____ Readiness | _____ Leverage | _____ TOTAL _____% |
| _____ If under \$200,000, waive presentation? | | | |



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) 2019 Main Proposal

PROJECT TITLE: National Loon Center: State Bird Survival and Protection **PROJECT STATEMENT:** To create the National Loon Center (NLC) dedicated to the survival of the iconic Common Loon. The NLC will provide environmental recreation, educational tourism and citizen science research on loon migration, habitat and long-term protection establishing Crosslake, MN as the nation's destination to experience the freshwater ecosystem we share with our Minnesota state bird and with other native wildlife. With an estimated 12,000 loons in Minnesota, more than any other state in the continental US, the Whitefish Chain of Lakes hosts one of largest migratory gatherings of loons. The National Audubon Society and other states have declared that the Common Loon is in danger of extinction before the end of the century. This clearly attests to the need for a NLC dedicated to the protection of the Minnesota state bird. The National Loon Center Foundation (501c3) will build a 15,000 square foot National Loon Center including water quality and wildlife habitat exhibits, a loon and freshwater research center, and interactive technology to provide hands-on experiential education in an onsite partnership with the Brainerd Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce (BLACC) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (US ACE). Site related features will include a 3,100 foot shoreline habitat protection project with environmentally-friendly public docks, boardwalks and trails, and educational interpretive areas. These features will provide physical access to the habitat protection demonstration sites, water quality initiatives, invasive species prevention, boater and water safety, and loon rafts. All site planning will be funded by local philanthropic giving, sponsors and other grants. The US ACE has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to build the NLC to be developed on seven acres of federal lands (estimated market value of \$2,600,000) at the US ACE and Crosslake Recreational Area (230,000 visitors in 2017). This allows us to utilize public land already developed. With \$50,000 committed in local financial contributions for planning to date and over 160 local, state and federal partners, the NLC is a community driven project led by the National Loon Center Foundation. The NLC will ultimately serve as an economic engine. Based on research from the National Eagle Center, Wabasha, Minnesota has realized a \$2,500,000 increase in spending in their city and an estimated additional 80,000 wildlife enthusiasts, birders, outdoor recreationalists, and eco-tourists annually visiting the region. The NLC will be revenue generating for operations and maintenance. ENRTF/LCCMR request is \$4,000,000 (total project value \$9,613,927). www.nationalllooncenter.org LCCMR video presentation available.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Habitat protection, outdoor education and recreation project (seven acres, 3,100 feet shoreline)

The first NLC activity will establish site related features creating interpretive trails, educational signage, public docks and boardwalks that will provide physical access to the shoreline protection project (3,100 feet of shoreline) and will include native landscaping surrounding the center and trails. Also included will be outdoor learning and research kiosks, demonstration areas for water quality initiatives, invasive species prevention, boater safety, loon raft(s), best practices for loon survival and environmental recreation opportunities connecting the Whitefish Chain of Lakes to the town's center and new community school.

Our objective is to create several projects to protect and increase migratory bird habitat, increase loon survival rates, and assist water quality initiatives such as erosion control and stormwater runoff, while providing educational tourism and environmental recreation. Visitors will benefit from habitat protection demonstrations that can be applied on other lakes and heavily used recreational areas. These measures will help produce more loons and will help lower loon mortality. Citizen science programs and statewide data collection coordinated by the National Loon Center will play an important part in these efforts.

Tasks include site related features development including five outdoor demonstration learning kiosks, approximately 3,800 feet of interpretive trails, boardwalks and docks, an outdoor educational loon nesting exhibit, fishing dock and aquatic invasive species prevention exhibit, native landscaping installation and implementing 3,100 feet of shoreline protection. The NLC habitat protection, outdoor education and recreation project features will be evaluated quarterly through the collaboration of National Loon Center staff, US Army Corp of Engineers, Brainerd Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)
2019 Main Proposal**

(MN DNR), NLC visitors, and lake associations in regard to loon habitat and water quality education, research and recreation.

ENRTF BUDGET for Activity 1. Habitat protection, outdoor education and recreation project install (7 acres, 3,100 feet shoreline) LCCMR/ENRTF \$1,247,887 REQUEST

| Outcome | Completion Date |
|---|-----------------|
| Activity 1. Complete construction of shoreline protection 3,100 feet, 7-acre day use environmental recreation area site related features including education docks/boardwalks and interpretive trails 3,100 feet, 5 learning demonstration kiosks | Spring 2020 |

Activity 2: National Loon Center construction (15,000 square feet)

The second activity is construction of the NLC facility. The sustainably-designed NLC will provide hands-on, experiential education in a state of the art facility that directly connects visitors with actions they can take for loon and wildlife conservation. Bringing the outdoor environment inside, the year-round facility will offer learning experiences that incorporate science, technology, arts and culture. The primary task of activity 2 will be construction of the 15,000 square foot NLC facility. The facility will include water quality and wildlife habitat educational exhibits, a loon and freshwater research center laboratory and classroom, and interactive technology to provide hands-on experiential education. The NLC will serve as the nation's educational destination to experience the freshwater ecosystem we share with our Minnesota state bird and all native wildlife; provide visitors an opportunity to learn and participate in best practices for wildlife conservation, habitat protect, responsible recreation and environmental research they can apply in their own communities; and will ultimately serve as an economic engine for the region. The NLC facility and educational offerings will be evaluated quarterly using both quantitative and qualitative data through the collaboration of National Loon Center staff, US ACE, BLACC, MN DNR, NLC visitors and lake associations in regard to loon habitat, water quality protection education, research, recreation, as well as revenue generation for sustainability.

ENRTF BUDGET for Activity 2. Creation of the National Loon Center facility (15,000 square feet)

- LCCMR/ENRTF \$2,752,113 Request

| Outcome | Completion Date |
|--|-----------------|
| Activity 2. Complete Construction of the National Loon Center (15,000 square feet) | Summer 2021 |

B. Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding :US Army Corps of Engineers and Crosslake Recreational Area & Campground, Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce, The City of Crosslake, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Whitefish Area Property Owners Association, Whitefish Yacht Club, North Central Small Business Development Center at Central Lakes College, National Park Service US Department of the Interior, Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District, University of Minnesota

IV. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:

The National Loon Center's long-term implementation and funding will be realized through admissions, memberships, donors, grants and promotional sales revenue (based on data from the National Eagle Center Business model).

V. TIME LINE REQUIREMENTS:

Fall 2018-2019: Site development, shoreline protection, public docks, boat launches with invasion species interactive education, interpretive parks and trails system, outdoor exhibits, recreational research outdoor attraction, observation areas, water hazards & fishing pier education, public bathrooms and environmental recreation and trails head boathouse, construction of the site and National Loon Center Facility and accessory structures. Operation and maintenance of the site (docks/launch/trail system/outdoor exhibits/accessory structures) is included. Spring 2020: Construction of the National Loon Center facility (15,000 sf) with operations and maintenance of the building until revenue generating. Spring 2021: GRAND OPENING

2019 Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

Project Title: National Loon Center- State Bird Survival and Protection

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

| BUDGET ITEM (See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses") | AMOUNT |
|--|--------------------|
| Personnel: Eligible Expenses b. | N/A |
| Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: Eligible Expenses d. | \$1,663,642 |
| Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Eligible Expenses e. | \$188,145 |
| Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): Eligible Expenses f. | \$7,012,140 |
| Travel: | N/A |
| Additional Budget Items: Education, Fundraising and Working Capital | \$750,000 |
| TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST = | \$4,000,000 |

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

| SOURCE OF FUNDS | AMOUNT | Status |
|--|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: Deep Water Horizon Settlement funds | \$1,713,927 | <i>Researching & Drafting</i> |
| Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: MN DNR request to US Fish & Wildlife | \$450,000 | <i>Pending</i> |
| In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: Long Term Land Lease with US Army Corps of Engineers (Crosslake, MN) in lieu of land purchase | \$2,600,000 | <i>Memorandum of Understanding</i> |
| Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation: Request | \$4,000,000 | Pending |
| Other Funding History: Private Philanthropy | \$850,000 | <i>In Process</i> |

National Loon Center

State Bird Survival and Protection



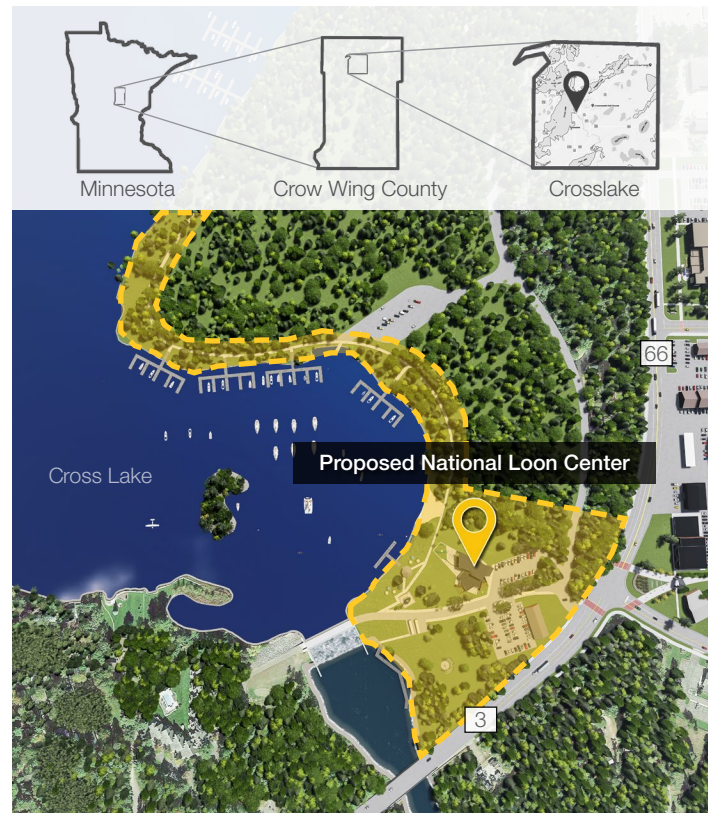
The proposed project includes a 15,000-square-foot National Loon Center as well as 3,100 feet of shoreline protection efforts that will reduce invasive species and allow loon nesting. Learning opportunities will extend beyond the interactive exhibits into the bay and throughout the new trail system along the shore. The proposed project site, owned by the US Army Corps of Engineers, is seven acres.



The project will include an interpretive trail system, docks, and shoreline protection. The National Loon Center will house the Fresh Water Institute, Chamber of Commerce offices, US Army Corps of Engineers, interactive exhibits, and multi-purpose rooms for the community. Projections suggest the facility will draw 80,000 visitors each year.



Visit NationalLoonCenter.org, click on "LCCMR Video"



National Loon Center Foundation

Organization Description

The National Loon Center Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit organization, with its primary purpose being to support funding and donations through its non-profit status. The foundation works with many partners in and around the Whitefish Chain of Lakes area and beyond to make the collective vision of the National Loon Center a reality.

Our mission is to create and maintain the National Loon Center in the heart of Crosslake, Minnesota as the lead research, recreation, environmental and eco-tourism attraction to preserve and protect loon habitat through important public and private partnerships locally and nationally.

This project's sustainable focus areas are tourism, resilient communities and natural resources. A grant received from University of Minnesota is underway to confirm that the National Loon Center will be responsibly located and will create an attraction that is in keeping with our unique resort community's commercial district located on our shoreline.

We have had overwhelming support from both public and private sectors. Applications, grants and funding sources for 2017-18 phase have been numerous and generous! Grants have been received and pledged from University of Minnesota, National Park Service, National Joint Powers Alliance, Crosslakers, Crosslake Ideal Lions Club, National Loon Center Foundation, Initiative Foundation, Crow Wing County Lakes and Rivers Alliance, Widseth Smith and Nolting Architecture and Engineering firm, and private donors.

Please visit www.nationallooncenter.org for more information.

Project Manager Qualifications

Leah Nolan Heggerston (218) 839-9042 info@nationallooncenter.org

Vice President/Treasurer of the National Loon Center Foundation

Board of Directors for Lakes Area Kids Enrichment Foundation -owners of the new eight million community school next to the future National Loon Center

Member of community based volunteer organization THE CROSSLAKERS

Resident of Crosslake

Business Owner in Manufacturing – Pallet Minnesota, Katie's Firewood and Silver Star Industries, Land Use Consultant & Project Development for over 20 years