



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2023 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2023-089

Proposal Title: Voyageurs Wildlife Atlas

Project Manager Information

Name: Christina Hausman Rhode

Organization: Voyageurs Conservancy

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: We will create the Voyageurs Wildlife Atlas to summarize nearly a half-century history of wildlife research and monitoring in Voyageurs National Park in accessible digital and hardcopy formats.

Funds Requested: \$195,000

Proposed Project Completion: December 31, 2025

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary Category: Foundational Natural Resource Data and Information (A)

Project Location

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

Region(s): NE, Metro,

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

Statewide

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Narrative

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

Long-term wildlife research and monitoring programs in Voyageurs National Park, spanning up to 50 years in length, have been conducted for iconic species such as bald eagles, common loons, moose, white-tailed, black bears, gray wolves, and beavers. Many other less "glamorous" species or taxa have also been monitored periodically over the last 50 years, including forest breeding birds, cormorants, great blue herons, secretive marshbirds, muskrats, rodents and shrews, snowshoe hares, and frogs and toads. Further, more than 250 peer-reviewed publications, books, technical reports, graduate theses & dissertations, and other publications have been published about wildlife in the Voyageurs National Park area, the vast majority of them since the park's establishment in 1975. At 218,000 acres in size, Voyageurs National Park is likely one of the most well-studied locations in the State, representing a variety of habitat types including boreal forest, wetlands, bogs, streams, and lakes ranging in area from <1 to 360 square miles. The Park is also unique in its relatively pristine, roadless environment and absence of hunting, trapping, vehicle collisions, and other sources of human-caused mortality that can make it an excellent laboratory for wildlife studies.

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.

Despite this wealth of wildlife population information from one geographic location, there is no single repository where this information can be accessed by the public, schools, land managers, and scientists. Even more importantly, data from some monitoring programs or research projects remains in unpublished formats that need to be adequately collated and analyzed. Because of its protected status and relatively pristine ecosystems, Voyageurs National Park is often used a reference for many wildlife species in Minnesota and beyond.

The Voyageurs Wildlife Atlas will address these problems by presenting relevant information about population size, trends, and distribution of wildlife in the Voyageurs National Park area. The standardized format will include information about identification, including Ojibwe, English, and scientific names, and best locations to see the species in the park. It will also summarize major research findings and provide links to original data (where available) and primary literature for each species.

The Atlas will be developed to display/access this information in a public website, similar to the MN Breeding Bird Atlas in some ways, but specific to Voyageurs National Park area and inclusive of all mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and birds. The website will be completed in 2025, the Park's 50th Anniversary.

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?

For the public to better care about wild places like Voyageurs National Park and to understand the value of wildlife research and monitoring, they need to have access to comprehensive and compelling information that synthesizes scientific data for public consumption. The online Voyageurs Wildlife Atlas will introduce the public to the unique species of the park, including photos, video, population sizes, trends, as well as the Ojibwe, English and scientific names of species. The Atlas will also include information about identification and best locations to see the species in the park and will include components with K-12 audiences in mind.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Compile available information and build interactive website for the Voyageurs Wildlife Atlas

Activity Budget: \$195,000

Activity Description:

Based on verified species lists for Voyageurs National Park, project staff and collaborators will compile available information related to monitoring and research of wildlife species in Voyageurs National Park area. This process will include:

- 1) Identifying and locating all known sources of information, including using crowd-sourcing strategies to find more obscure or older documents. A bibliography for each wildlife species will be completed. All documents will be scanned, and those that can be shared will be made available on the website.
- 2) Extracting information about distribution, abundance, trends, etc, from available sources and entering into standard format established for Atlas.
- 3) Complete other components of species accounts including Ojibwe names, description, and best locations to view.

Simultaneously, project staff and collaborators will be working with the contract web designer/programmer to design and develop the interactive website template. Lee Pfannmuller and others involved in the Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas website will be consulted to optimize web design for this type of information. Ideally, the site will be launched when 25% of species accounts have been completed, and the remaining 75% of species accounts will be added as information becomes completed and verified. See the attached visual for draft website design.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Compile available information related to monitoring and research of wildlife species in Voyageurs National Park	December 31, 2024
Build interactive website for Voyageurs Wildlife Atlas	December 31, 2025

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Dr. Steve K. Windels	Voyageurs National Park	Will oversee scope and content of Atlas; editor; section contributor; Wildlife Biologist at Voyageurs National Park since 2003 that designed/collected data on beavers, muskrats, wolves, moose, deer, lynx, mustelids, hares, eagles, loons, cormorants, forest breeding birds, marsh birds, and more.	No
Leland "Lee" Grim	Voyageurs National Park (retired)	Section contributor; retired 40 yr NPS employee who worked on many of the monitoring and research projects to be summarized.	No
Dr. Jennyfer Cruz	Boise State University	Section contributor; Wildlife Biologist who collaborated on recent studies that used existing Voyageurs National Park datasets for eagles, ospreys, great blue herons, and common loon.	No
Dr. Dave Garshelis	None (retired MNDNR)	Section contributor; retired MDNR scientist who studied black bears in Voyageurs National Park for 25 years.	No
Dr. Adam Ahlers	Kansas State University	Section contributor; Wildlife biologist who has collaborated on research and monitoring of muskrats, otters, and mink at Voyageurs National Park.	No
Lee Pfanmuller	None (retired MNDNR)	Will advise on web design based on experience with MN Breeding Bird Atlas.	No
Breanna Trygg	Voyageurs Conservancy	Will integrate use of Wildlife Atlas in new Voyageurs Classroom K12 programming as appropriate; introduce Atlas to teacher partners	No
TBD	TBD	Other interested individuals and/or university students from Minnesota will be recruited to help complete narrative sections of remaining, less-studied species accounts.	No

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 website will be maintained by Voyageurs Conservancy after the completion of the project. Occasional updates to species accounts will be provided by NPS staff or park partners.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
The Voyageurs Classroom Initiative	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 05e	\$348,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Christina Hausman Rhode

Job Title: Executive Director

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

While a Project Manager will coordinate implementation, the Voyageurs Conservancy's executive director will ensure project success, working in close partnership with the National Park Service.

Christina Hausman Rhode has been the executive director of Voyageurs Conservancy since 2014. She has over 15 years experience working in the nonprofit industry with a particular focus on partnership development, community engagement and philanthropy. She has previously worked for The Nature Conservancy and the Hennepin Health

Foundation. Rhode holds a bachelor's degree in biology and political science, and a minor in journalism from Augustana University in Sioux Falls, SD. Rhode is a graduate of the Institute of Executive Leadership Development at the University of St. Thomas and is currently enrolled in the National Park Foundation's first-ever National Park's Friends Leadership Institute. In 2016, she was recognized with a Midwest Region Champion Award from the National Park Service. Rhode has been able to build in-roads and establish strong, positive relationships between regional communities, outside stakeholders, the National Park Service, and Voyageurs Conservancy. She has successfully managed large-scale projects, like the Land Preservation Initiative, and been able to launch new public engagement efforts, like the National Park Teen Ambassador program.

Organization: Voyageurs Conservancy

Organization Description:

Voyageurs Conservancy serves the community as an official nonprofit partner to the National Park Service, supporting recreation, preservation, public engagement, and land and water conservation at Voyageurs National Park. Voyageurs Conservancy's main initiatives include:

Keep Voyageurs Wild

Voyageurs Conservancy works with the National Park Service to protect Voyageurs' lands, waters, wildlife, night skies, and wild character through public education, advocacy, funding restoration and research work, and purchase of land to add to the park. Priority efforts include the Land Preservation Initiative, Dark Sky Initiative, wetland restoration, and aquatic invasive species prevention.

Love Your Park

The Conservancy helps grow a large, diverse community of park stewards by implementing events and programs that expand volunteerism and public connection to park experiences and celebrate the park's legacy.

Youth Ambassadors & Voyageurs Classroom

Through school field trip grants, environmental education programs, the Teen Ambassador project, and an emerging Field Fellows program, the Conservancy works to ignite a passion for Voyageurs and conservation in a younger, more diverse audience.

Voyageurs Experience

The Conservancy works to improve the visitor experience at Voyageurs National Park by providing resources for access and sustainable recreation projects and improvements.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Project Manager/Lead Writer		Project oversight. Responsible for compiling information, writing and editing selected species accounts, designing/editing website content.			20%	2		\$138,000
Project Assistant		Project support such as literature searches, scanning/copying documents, and other administrative support for project			20%	0.3		\$15,000
							Sub Total	\$153,000
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Professional website developer needed to build the website platform/template				0		\$35,000
							Sub Total	\$35,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Sheet scanner (\$250), 6 (qty) external hard drives for data storage (\$125ea)	Sheet scanner (\$250), 6 (qty) external hard drives for data storage (\$125ea). Needed to scan documents and ensure copies of data are backed and secured for use by Project Manager and other project staff/collaborators					\$1,000
							Sub Total	\$1,000
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-

Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	12 round-trips MPLS to International Falls; 600 miles RT; 1 person; \$500/trip	For Project Manager to visit International Falls for meetings with Voyageurs National Staff and/or access information held at park.					\$6,000
							Sub Total	\$6,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$195,000

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	Voyageurs National Park	Staff time by Project Collaborator Dr. Steve Windels (\$30,000 salary/comp * 2 yrs = \$60K) and other VNP staff (\$30,000 salary/com * 2 yrs = \$60k) for compiling information and writing species accounts. Voyageurs National Park/National Park Service has also conservatively contributed in excess of \$10 MILLION to collect and analyze wildlife monitoring data since the park's establishment in 1975, and much of this data will provide the foundation for the Atlas.	Pending	\$120,000
In-Kind	Volunteer hours contributed by non-NPS Project Collaborators for contributing to species accounts.	Volunteer hours contributed by non-NPS Project Collaborators for contributing to approx. 25 of the species accounts that have the most data. Conservatively estimated at 20 hours per species * 25 species = 500 hrs. Expertise conservatively valued @\$100/hr. Total in-kind contribution conservatively estimated = \$50,000.	Pending	\$50,000
In-Kind	Voyageurs Conservancy	Contribution of high quality, high resolution photo and video content (estimating 300 species x \$25 per photo asset/second of video) \$7500. Hours contributed by Conservancy staff for communications management for website roll out and outreach (50 hrs x \$30=\$1,500). Executive Director management and collaboration (3% x 2 yrs = \$5,100).	Pending	\$14,100
			Non State Sub Total	\$184,100
			Funds Total	\$184,100

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [1133aa49-f0f.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Page 1: shows two examples of what the Voyageurs Wildlife Atlas might look like. One example shows the Species Description information for the Common Loon, Maang. The other example shows the Distribution information for Moose, Mooz. Page 2: maps showing geographic impact of the project....

Financial Capacity

File: [309f0d74-709.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
VC Board Resolution Signed	672e699a-a7f.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
Letters of Support from 11 Organizations and Individuals	20e0c75f-015.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

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

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?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Minnesota's Voyageurs National Park has been the subject of intensive and extensive wildlife monitoring and research throughout it's nearly 50-yr history. When completed, Voyageurs Wildlife Atlas will provide access to comprehensive and compelling scientific information about the park's wildlife. The Atlas will introduce the public to the unique species of the park, including photos, video, population sizes, trends, as well as the Ojibwe, English and scientific names of the species. The Atlas will also include information about identification and best locations to see each animal in the park and will include components with K-12 audiences in mind.



Voyageurs Wildlife Atlas

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Common Loon, Maang (*Gavia immer*)

[Species Description](#)
[Distribution](#)
[Status and Trends](#)
[Wildlife Viewing](#)
[Gallery](#)







Description

Common Loons are large, diving waterbirds with rounded heads and dagger-like bills. They have long bodies and short tails that are usually not visible. In flight, they look stretched out, with a long, flat body and long neck and bill. Their feet stick out beyond the tail (unlike ducks and cormorants), looking like wedges.

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Common Loons are stealthy divers, submerging without a splash to catch fish. Pairs and groups often call to each other at night. In flight, notice their shallow wingbeats and unwavering, bee-lined flight path.

Life History

Migration:
A medium-distance migrant; winters are spent in the coastal waters of North and Central America.

Food:
Primarily small fish, secured by diving and swimming under water.


Nest:
A mound of grasses, twigs, and aquatic vegetation placed on the ground near the lakeshore and often on an island.

Relative Size

Larger and longer-bodied than a Mallard; smaller and shorter-necked than a Canada Goose.



MEASUREMENTS
Both Sexes
Length: 26.0-35.9 in (66-91 cm)
Weight: 88.2-215.2 oz (2500-6100 g)
Wingspan: 40.9-51.6 in (104-131 cm)




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Moose, Mooz (*Alces alces*)

[Species Description](#)
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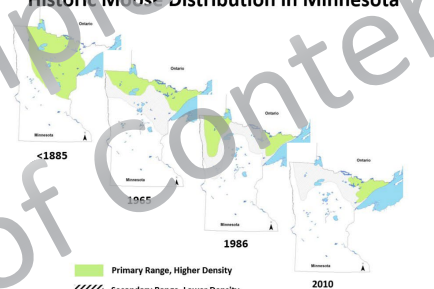


■ *A. a. gigas*
■ *A. a. shirasi*
■ *A. a. andersoni*
■ *A. a. americana*

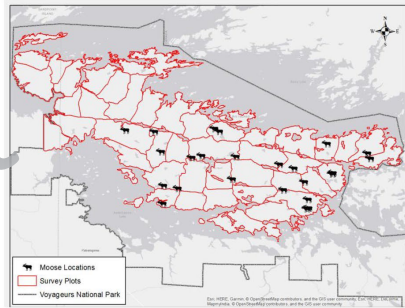
North American moose range at present. The subspecies *andersoni* is the one present in northern Minnesota. [source](#)

Moose range in Minnesota has been in decline since at least 1885, due to factors such as hunting, habitat loss, and disease. [source](#)

Historic Moose Distribution in Minnesota



■ Primary Range, Higher Density
■ Secondary Range, Lower Density



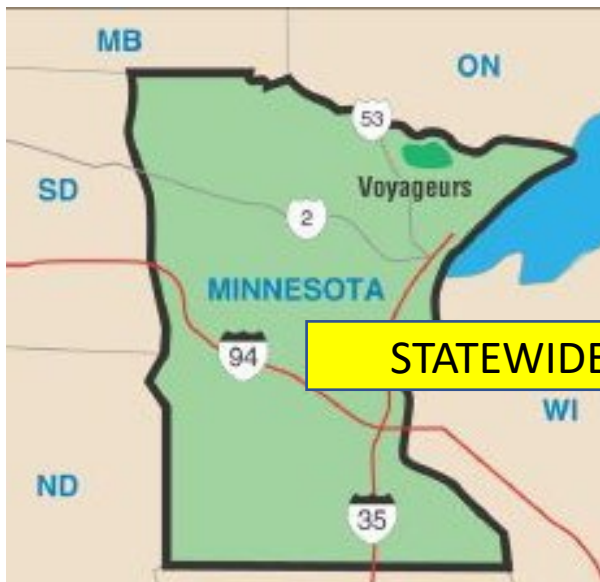
■ Moose Locations
□ Survey Plots
— Voyageurs National Park

Aerial surveys for moose in Voyageurs National Park have documented that ~90% of moose in the park are found in the eastern portions of the Kabetogama Peninsula. [source](#)



The Voyageurs Wildlife Atlas will make information about Voyageurs National Park and its unique wildlife resources accessible and available to local, state, and national audiences.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES



STATEWIDE



NATIONWIDE



Information developed for the Voyageurs Wildlife Atlas will also be used as a resource for the LCCMR-funded project, "Voyageurs Classroom Initiative"