

**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

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

**Email:** chausman@voyageurs.org

## **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. Ineli gible** | **% Bene fits** | **# FTE** | **Class ified 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** |

### **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](https://lccmrprojectmgmt.leg.mn/media/map/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](https://lccmrprojectmgmt.leg.mn/media/financial_capacity/309f0d74-709.pdf)

#### ***Board Resolution or Letter***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **File** |
| VC Board Resolution Signed | [672e699a-a7f.pdf](https://lccmrprojectmgmt.leg.mn/media/attachments/672e699a-a7f.pdf) |

### **Optional Attachments**

#### ***Support Letter or Other***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **File** |
| Letters of Support from 11 Organizations and Individuals | [20e0c75f-015.pdf](https://lccmrprojectmgmt.leg.mn/media/attachments/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