Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Voyageurs National Park Wetland Restoration Project, Phase 3

ML 2023 Request for Funding

General Information

Date: 05/31/2022

Proposal Title: Voyageurs National Park Wetland Restoration Project, Phase 3

Funds Requested: $1,640,000

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Steve Windels
Title: Project Leader/Wildlife Biologist
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Location Information

County Location(s): St. Louis and Koochiching.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Northern Forest

Activity types:

- Restore

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands

Narrative

Abstract

Wetlands in large lakes in the Voyageurs National Park area have been degraded by invasive cattails, which reduces biodiversity, degrades fish/wildlife habitat, and outcompetes wild rice/manoomin. Phases 1&2 of the

project entailed refinement of restoration methods. We will continue mechanical treatment methods in Phase 3 to remove invasive cattails and other vegetation, including use of contracted harvesting machines, NPS owned-cutting machines, and hand crews in more inaccessible areas. Total new acreage restored/enhanced will exceed 500 ac, with additional acres possible with successful prescribed burning. Most treated wetlands will see increases in wild rice/manoomin.

Design and Scope of Work

Earlier phases of our Wetland Restoration Project were completed under an Adaptive Management framework, aka "Learning by Doing." Through these previous efforts we have better refined our restoration techniques, including which techniques work best in different types of wetlands or under different water level conditions.

For this Phase 3 proposal, we have identified an additional 36 wetland parcels (515 ac total) in Kabetogama and Rainy Lake portions of Voyageurs National Park that could be restored or enhanced using a combination of methods. Dense stands of invasive hybrid cattail will be treated using one or more of these methods: 1) underwater and surface cuts of cattail using amphibious cutting machines and/or hand crews; 2) total removal of floating cattail mats using contracted harvesting equipment; 3) smothering of shallow-rooted cattails using organic spoils from total removal methods; and 4) prescribed burning when conditions allow. Woody encroachment into shallow sedge habitats will be set-back using hand crews, and these sedge habitats can be further improved using prescribed fire when conditions allow.

We have several excellent examples from Phases 1&2 of our project of wild rice/manoomin returning naturally from the dormant seed bank once released from competition with invasive cattails. However, efforts to enhance wild rice stands in treated wetlands using purchased wild rice seed have been mixed. On the other hand, mixes of native seed containing a variety of sedges, rushes, and other emergent and broadleaf wetland plants have been successful in increasing plant diversity in treated areas. Based on the knowledge our project has gained to date, we will enhance restoration efforts using wild rice and other native seed mixes targeted to areas most likely to achieve our objectives of increasing area of wild rice and/or increasing plant diversity in restored wetlands.

Voyageurs National Park initiated a 10-year Wetland Restoration Plan in 2016 to restore degraded wetlands in the park, particularly those impacted by invasive hybrid cattail, and Phase 2 will be mostly completed in 2023 with generous assistance from a grant from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. If funded, completion of Phase 3 of this proposed project would further restore cattail-invaded wetlands to diverse wetland communities that will create and enhance fish and wildlife habitat and improve recreational and cultural opportunities for all Minnesotans.

During phase 3, Voyageurs National Park will be working in cooperation with Voyageurs Conservancy. This partnership will assist in grant management and the long term maintenance of these restored wetlands.

How does the proposal address habitats that have significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and/or threatened or endangered species, and list targeted species?

Over 50% of Minnesota's wetlands have been lost over the last 200 years. Of the remaining wetlands, most are under threat of invasive species including non-native cattails. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency identified non-native cattails as the single greatest negative impact on Minnesota wetlands (MPCA 2015). More than 43% of threatened or endangered species in Minnesota and elsewhere in the U.S. depend on wetlands. Climate change impacts to hydrologic cycles are expected to further stress most wetland systems in Minnesota. It is therefore critical to restore remaining wetlands which have been degraded by invasive species. The proposed wetland project will result in a more natural and diverse community that will benefit a variety of both game and non-game species of fish and wildlife. One of the main target species for the proposed project is wild rice/manoomin, a plant

with high cultural and biological significance. In addition, wetlands will be restored to create diverse plant communities to create or enhance habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife species. Targeted bird species include yellow rail, American bittern, least bittern, Virginia rail, red-necked grebe, and black tern, all of which are on Minnesota's list of Species in Greatest Conservation Need. Waterfowl species positively affected include trumpeter swans, Canada geese, mallards, and wood ducks during the breeding season, and ring-necked ducks, green-winged teal, American widgeons, and others during the spring and fall migration. Targeted mammal species include several important furbearer species, namely muskrats, river otter, American beaver, and mink. Important targeted game fish species include northern pike, whose spawning areas are degraded by invasive non-native cattails. Forage fish such as minnows will also benefit from the restoration. Several other species on Minnesota's list of Species in Greatest Conservation Need will also benefit from the proposed project, including: common snapping turtles, eastern red-backed salamanders, a variety of insects such as caddisflies, and various mollusk species.

What is the degree of timing/opportunistic urgency and why it is necessary to spend public money for this work as soon as possible?

Non-native, hybrid cattail continues to invade/degrade lakeshores and other wetland habitats in northern Minnesota, requiring immediate removal to reverse wetland loss. Further, seedbanks of natural plant species exists beneath most invasive cattail; the sooner treatment occurs the better the natural regeneration of wild rice and other important species. Some sedge habitats in the park are being encroached by woody vegetation that should be treated to reduce further degradation of these habitats. Large sections of floating cattail mats continue to detach from bays and move via by wind action, especially in flood events such as June 2014 and now May 2022. These floating mats create new invasions and can cause navigational hazards, and immediate removal can prevent property damage and reduce the spread of invasive cattails to pristine wetlands. Overall, our efforts to increase biodiversity in restored wetlands is critical for building resilience to climate change and other environmental concerns.

Describe how the proposal uses science-based targeting that leverages or expands corridors and complexes, reduces fragmentation or protects areas identified in the MN County Biological Survey:

The project was designed using an Adaptive Management framework to improve future management decisions. In the first phases of the project, this management framework has allowed the development of the most cost-effective techniques while simultaneously restoring wetlands. It has now also allowed targeted restoration for future management in Phase 3 by focusing on restoring the most critical wetlands. Our work has been focused on restoring or enhancing key components of individual wetlands to improve ecological function and biodiversity within the larger wetland complex.

While the MN County Biological Survey activities have yet to be completed/published in this area (this is the last part of the state to be surveyed), it is already known that many of the wetland habitats in the area are currently threatened by invasive cattails. Any rare species and habitats identified by the upcoming MN Biological Survey will add further urgency to our proposed restoration work.

Which two sections of the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are most applicable to this project?

- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

Which two other plans are addressed in this proposal?

- Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

- The Nature Conservancy's Superior Mixed Forest Ecoregional Plan

Describe how your program will advance the indicators identified in the plans selected:

Voyageurs National Park and partners are currently implementing a 10-year Wetland Restoration Plan. While the initial stages to determine the most cost-effective cattail removal and wetland restoration techniques are funded, OHF funds would allow us to implement Phase 3 of the plan, the continued restoration and enhancement of lacustrine (lake) wetlands and associated fish and wildlife species in the Voyageurs National Park area.
These efforts will primarily advance the indicators of Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025, specifically restoring or enhancing habitat for the list of wetland-dependent or wetland-sensitive species named in earlier sections of this proposal. Voyageurs National Park is conducting monitoring of a number of these species, and short-term results (i.e., 1-2 years post-restoration) suggest we have improved habitat conditions for many of these species.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal?

Northern Forest

- Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas

Describe how your program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife as indicated in the LSOHC priorities:

Invasive species are an ever-increasing problem, especially in critical habitats such as wetlands. The public and land management agencies are gradually becoming more aware of the severity of cattail invasions and the threat they pose to biodiversity, recreation, and cultural needs. Our proposed project will take place within a US National Park and two of Minnesota's most iconic lakes – Rainy and Kabetogama. The combined visibility of these areas will enhance our ability to increase awareness of the issue and detail real solutions to an otherwise "sticky" problem shared by all Minnesotans. We are continuing to improve our restoration efforts through the current Phase 2 of our project. Adaptation of these techniques in areas outside of our project area will provide greater protection of critical habitats outside of initial proposed treatment areas. These areas provide critical habitat for fish, especially spawning areas for species such as northern pike. Many game species, such as aquatic furbearers and migratory waterfowl, rely on these habitats for critical stages of their life. Other wildlife species, especially those on Minnesota's list of Species with Greatest Conservation Need, depend on these habitats. There are also culturally significant species such as wild rice/manoomin, which are in need of expanded restoration efforts. Our wetland restoration project will restore critical wetland habitats while simultaneously extending outreach and education of relevant issues to a variety of local and regional constituencies.

What other fund may contribute to this proposal?

- Other

Does this proposal include leveraged funding?

No

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

Not Applicable

Non-OHF Appropriations

Year	Source	Amount
2016	National Park Service	240,000
2017	Initiative Foundation	500,000
2021	National Park Foundation	200,000

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

All invasive species control and habitat restoration projects require ongoing maintenance. Voyageurs National Park has staff and equipment capable of sustaining the monitoring and maintenance required once the OHF funds have been expended. Our non-profit park partner, Voyageurs Conservancy, has also made our Wetland Restoration Project as a key focus of their future fundraising campaigns, to ensure the work we started under the current 10-yr Restoration Plan can continue. We are also incorporating much of the ongoing monitoring and maintenance into current and future programs already occurring at the park and surrounding areas. We are working closely with other agencies and partners to develop long-term management plans for the control of invasive cattails and protection of critical wetland habitats. One of our project's objectives is to also increase public and other stakeholder awareness and education on the issues with invasive species and critical habitats which should in turn bring in future funds for long-term wetland management.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2023-2033	NPS	Determine long-term efficacy of restoration	Removal of any reemerging cattail	Replant native vegetation as needed
2023-2033	NPS	Monitor long-term impacts of restoration on wetlands	Monitor fish and wildlife in restored wetlands	-
2023-2033	NPS	Publish and present outcomes of project to educate and assist other wetland management plans	Continue partnerships to assist with cattail and wetland management	Develop effective cattail and wetland management strategies

Identify indicator species and associated quantities this habitat will typically support:

Wild rice is capable of producing up to 500 pounds of seed per acre in a good year. The 515 acres of wetlands proposed to be restored or enhanced contain approximately 130 acres of invasive cattail in adequate water depths for wild rice to grow . Assuming the majority of these areas are capable of supporting wild rice, this could potentially yield up to 65,000 pounds of wild rice seed in a good year. This seed is an important food source for wildlife as well as being culturally significant. While wild rice is a targeted species by this project, wetlands will be restored to a diversity of native plant species. This will create habitats to support a wide variety of fish and wildlife species including species of greatest conservation need. These restored wetlands will also serve as seed sources for other wetlands outside the project area extending the positive impacts of this wetland restoration project.

For areas of total cattail removal, where we are essentially creating new, more suitable habitats for secretive marsh birds. Conservative estimates suggest up to 51 birds could be supported for species such as yellow rails, least bitterns, and black terns.

How will the program directly involve, engage, and benefit BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and diverse communities:

Several Native American communities in Minnesota have been working to restore wild rice elsewhere in the state. Our project will assist in that effort by re-establishing this culturally significant species throughout our project area.

Activity Details

Requirements

If funded, this proposal will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?
Yes

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program?
Yes

Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, Subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15?
Yes

Where does the activity take place?

- Public Waters
- Other : Voyageurs National Park, a 218,000 acre protected area that is the most protected class of units within the U.S. National Park Service

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program?
No

Other OHF Appropriation Awards

Have you received OHF dollars in the past through LSOHC?
Yes

Approp Year	Approp Amount Received	Amount Spent to Date	Leverage Reported in AP	Leverage Realized to Date	Acres Affected in AP	Acres Affected to Date	Complete/Final Report Approved?
2019	$1,270,000	$923,707	$776,100	$870,000	1,016	265	No

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Underwater and surface treatment of invasive cattails	2027
Total removal of floating mats of invasive cattails	2027
Remove woody encroachment in sedge habitats	2027
Re-seeding with native seed mixes	2027
Complete final reporting	2028

Budget

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$840,000	$412,000	NPS	$1,252,000
Contracts	$600,000	-	-	$600,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$25,000	$45,000	NPS	$70,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$85,000	$80,000	NPS	$165,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	$600,000	NPS	$600,000
Other Equipment/Tools	$30,000	$60,000	NPS	$90,000
Supplies/Materials	$60,000	$50,000	NPS, Voyageurs Conservancy	$110,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$1,640,000**	**$1,247,000**	**-**	**$2,887,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Field Crew Leader	0.25	4.0	-	$70,000	NPS	$70,000
Field Crew Leader	0.25	4.0	-	$70,000	NPS	$70,000
Interpretive Specialist	0.05	4.0	-	$20,000	NPS	$20,000
Red-carded Wildland Firefighters (4 people @ 0.01FTE/yr))	0.04	4.0	-	$18,000	NPS	$18,000
Fire Mgmt Officer/Burn Boss	0.05	4.0	-	$23,000	NPS	$23,000
Barge Operator	0.02	4.0	-	$9,000	NPS	$9,000
Marine Mechanics (2 @ 0.05FTE/yr)	0.1	4.0	-	$46,000	NPS	$46,000
Project Supervisor	0.05	4.0	-	$30,000	NPS	$30,000
Project Leader	0.2	4.0	-	$126,000	NPS	$126,000
Seasonal Restoration Tech	0.42	4.0	$70,000	$35,000	NPS	$105,000
Seasonal Restoration Tech	0.42	4.0	$70,000	$35,000	NPS	$105,000
Field Crew Leader	1.0	4.0	$280,000	-	-	$280,000
Restoration Ecologist/Program Manager	1.0	4.0	$420,000	-	-	$420,000

Capital Equipment

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total

Facilities, boats, barges, vehicles, restoration machine	-	$600,000	NPS	$600,000

Amount of Request: $1,640,000
Amount of Leverage: $1,247,000
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 76.04%
DSS + Personnel: $925,000
As a % of the total request: 56.4%
Easement Stewardship: -
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:
Capital expenses and equipment leverage from the NPS is currently owned property of the NPS. In-kind personnel costs and other costs are pending annual Federal appropriations.

Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable?
Yes

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
If funded at 70%, we would only be able to treat ~60% of the proposed acres each year over the 4 years of the project. Most reductions would need to come from the contractor costs.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
As we have learned in Phase 1&2 of this project, costs for FT staff (Program Mgr and Crew Leader) in this grant are basically fixed costs required to execute a project of this size, and these expenses cannot be reduced. Seasonal staff and DSS could be proportionally reduced.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A project of this magnitude requires consistent funding over a reasonable period (4 yrs) to ensure continuity of staffing/expertise and execution of stated goals. At 50% funding, this project is not feasible as proposed.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
As we have learned in Phase 1&2 of this project, costs for FT staff (Program Mgr and Crew Leader) in this grant are basically fixed costs required to execute a project of this size, and these expenses cannot be reduced.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?
No

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
$500k = contracting large harvesting equipment for cattail removal.
$100k = contracting for MCC or other youth corps-type positions for hand crews

Travel

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?
Yes

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging
Automobile lease for the project to travel to and from project sites and haul equipment and tools. Requesting one vehicle for the term of the project and leveraged with two additional vehicles funded by NPS.

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:
Yes

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?
Requested 5.2% of grand total for Direct Support Services, 100% of which is direct to this program. Anticipated leverage of 4.8% of grand total as in-kind support direct to this program

Other Equipment/Tools

Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?
Underwater brush saws for aquatic vegetation removal, brush saws for woody plant removal, attachments for restoration machine, tools for fixing equipment in the field.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?
Yes

Are the funds confirmed?
Yes

- In Kind : $1,247,000

Is Confirmation Document attached?
Yes

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	515	0	0	0	515
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**515**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**515**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	$1,640,000	-	-	-	$1,640,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$1,640,000**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$1,640,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	0	515	515
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**515**	**515**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	$1,640,000	$1,640,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$1,640,000**	**$1,640,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	$3,184	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	$3,184
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-

Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Outcomes

Programs in the northern forest region:

- Improved aquatic habitat indicators ~ *Pre-treatment surveys of vegetation and wildlife for potentially restored sites started as early as 2015, before Phase 1 was initiated. Short-term monitoring (i.e., 1-3 years post-restoration) has occurred on sites already restored and is planned for future restored sites as well. Longer term monitoring of vegetation and wildlife indicator species (e.g., 5-10 years post- restoration) is also planned. All monitoring and evaluation of the project is funded by NPS and partners.*

Parcels

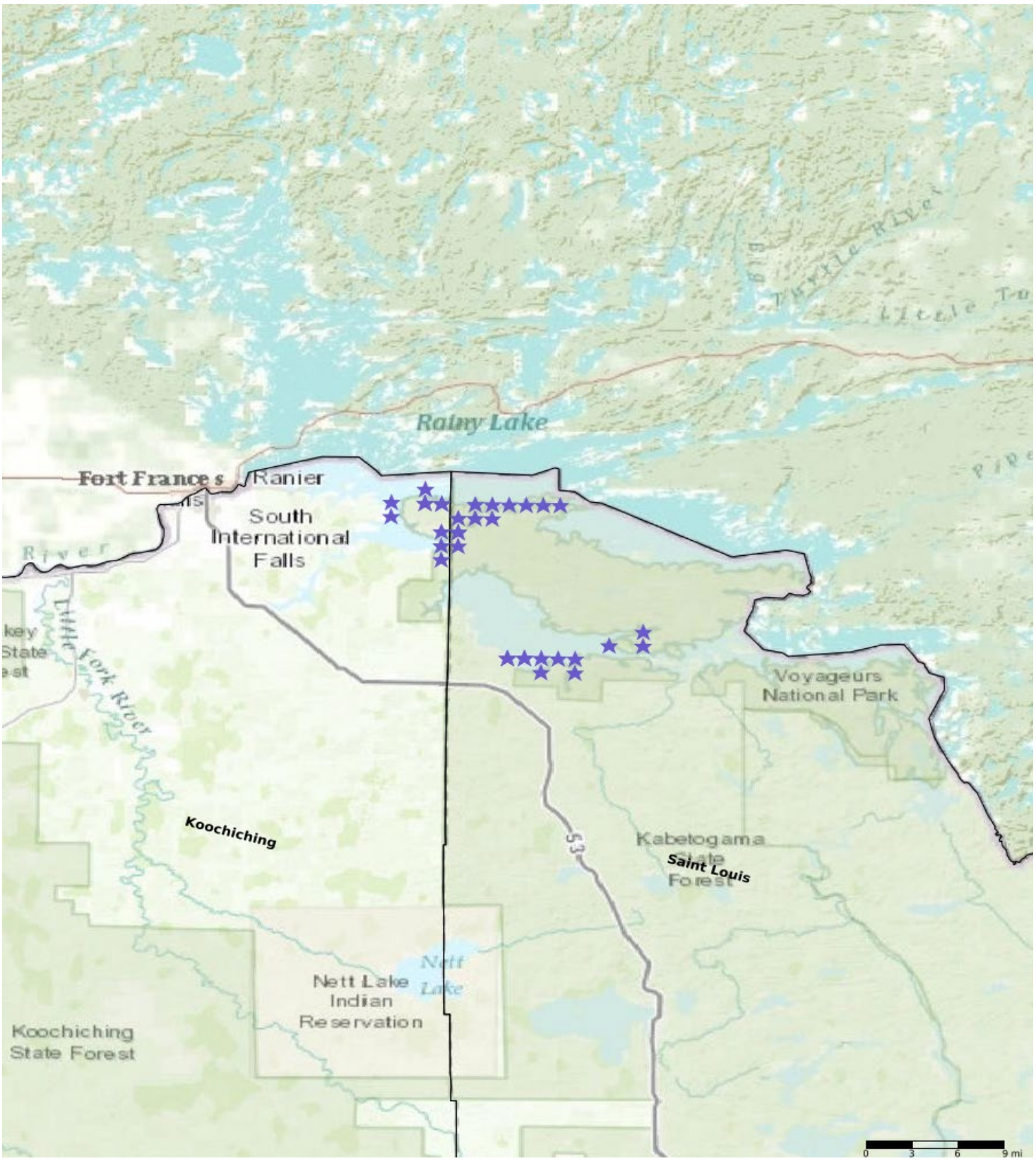
Sign-up Criteria?
No

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:
Parcels for treatment and restoration were first identified by the presence of invasive cattails of significant quantity to warrant restoration. Parcels were prioritized by the presence of floating cattail mats which have the potential to engulf bays and remove open water habitat and can detach causing navigational hazards and property damage. Submerged rooted mats were selected next as underwater cutting is a very successful method of eradicating cattail and will restrict new floating mats from forming. Areas where woody vegetation and cattails were encroaching into wetlands were also selected for increased restoration benefits. Parcels with archeological and cultural sites were avoided to protect those resources. The remaining parcels after this process are prioritized by ease of access and cost-effectiveness of restoration.

Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
East Black Bay	Koochiching	07022224	33	$105,000	Yes
East Black Bay	Koochiching	07022213	71	$226,500	Yes
East Black Bay	Koochiching	07022212	50	$158,000	Yes
Black Bay Narrows	Koochiching	07022204	5	$14,700	Yes
Dove Bay	Koochiching	07122236	11	$34,500	Yes
South of Sunrise Point	Koochiching	07122236	15	$49,000	Yes
Dove Bay	Koochiching	07122235	5	$14,700	Yes
South of Bushyhead	Koochiching	07122235	10	$33,500	Yes
Black Bay Narrows	Koochiching	07122233	1	$1,800	Yes
Dryweed Island	Koochiching	07122226	1	$3,900	Yes
Long Slough	St. Louis	06920222	1	$4,700	Yes
East Lost Bay Kabetogama	St. Louis	06920213	0	$0	Yes
East Black Bay	St. Louis	07021218	64	$202,600	Yes
Southwest Cranberry Bay	St. Louis	07021207	3	$10,200	Yes
East Black Bay	St. Louis	07021207	60	$191,300	Yes
East Cranberry Bay	St. Louis	07021204	0	$0	Yes
Southwest Cranberry Bay	St. Louis	07021205	29	$92,200	Yes
Long Slough	St. Louis	06920224	26	$83,500	Yes
East Lost Bay on Rainy	St. Louis	07121236	12	$39,300	Yes
East Lost Bay on Rainy	St. Louis	07120231	2	$7,900	Yes
Northwest Lost Bay on Rainy	St. Louis	07121235	14	$43,200	Yes
Northeast Alder Bay	St. Louis	07121234	26	$84,200	Yes
East Cranberry Bay	St. Louis	07121233	2	$5,500	Yes
North Cranberry Bay	St. Louis	07121232	8	$25,000	Yes
Southwest Cranberry Bay	St. Louis	07021206	1	$4,100	Yes
South Duck Bay	St. Louis	06921227	4	$13,100	Yes
Mud Bay	St. Louis	06920232	0	$0	Yes
East Irwin Bay	St. Louis	06921236	22	$70,600	Yes
Mud Bay	St. Louis	06920229	10	$34,500	Yes
East Irwin Bay	St. Louis	06920230	9	$28,800	Yes
Sphunge Island West	St. Louis	06921227	3	$10,800	Yes
East Irwin Bay	St. Louis	06921225	7	$21,800	Yes
Sphunge Island E	St. Louis	06921226	1	$3,900	Yes
South Duck Bay	St. Louis	06921226	7	$21,200	Yes

Parcel Map



- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee with PILT
- Protect in Fee W/O PILT
- Restore
- Enhance
- Other

Voyageurs National Park Wetland Restoration Project, Phase 3

Non-native cattails have invaded wetlands in the waters in and adjacent to Voyageurs National Park, displacing native vegetation, reducing biodiversity, degrading fish/wildlife habitat, impairing recreational opportunities, and degrading cultural resources, especially wild rice/manoomin.


Machine and Hand-Removal of Cattail


Contractors Removing Floating Mats


Burning to Remove Standing Dead Cattail and Woody Vegetation

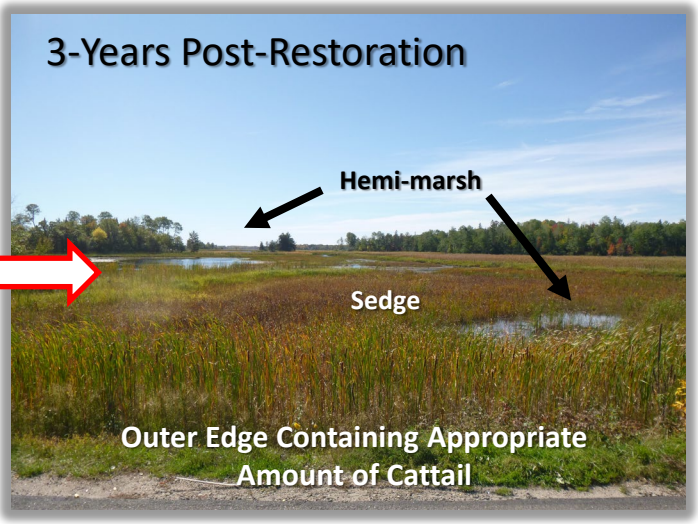

Seeding Treated Area with Diverse Native Plant Mix


Mating Dance of Sandhill Crane on Restored Wetland


Increased Biodiversity After Restoration

Photos Before and After Restoration

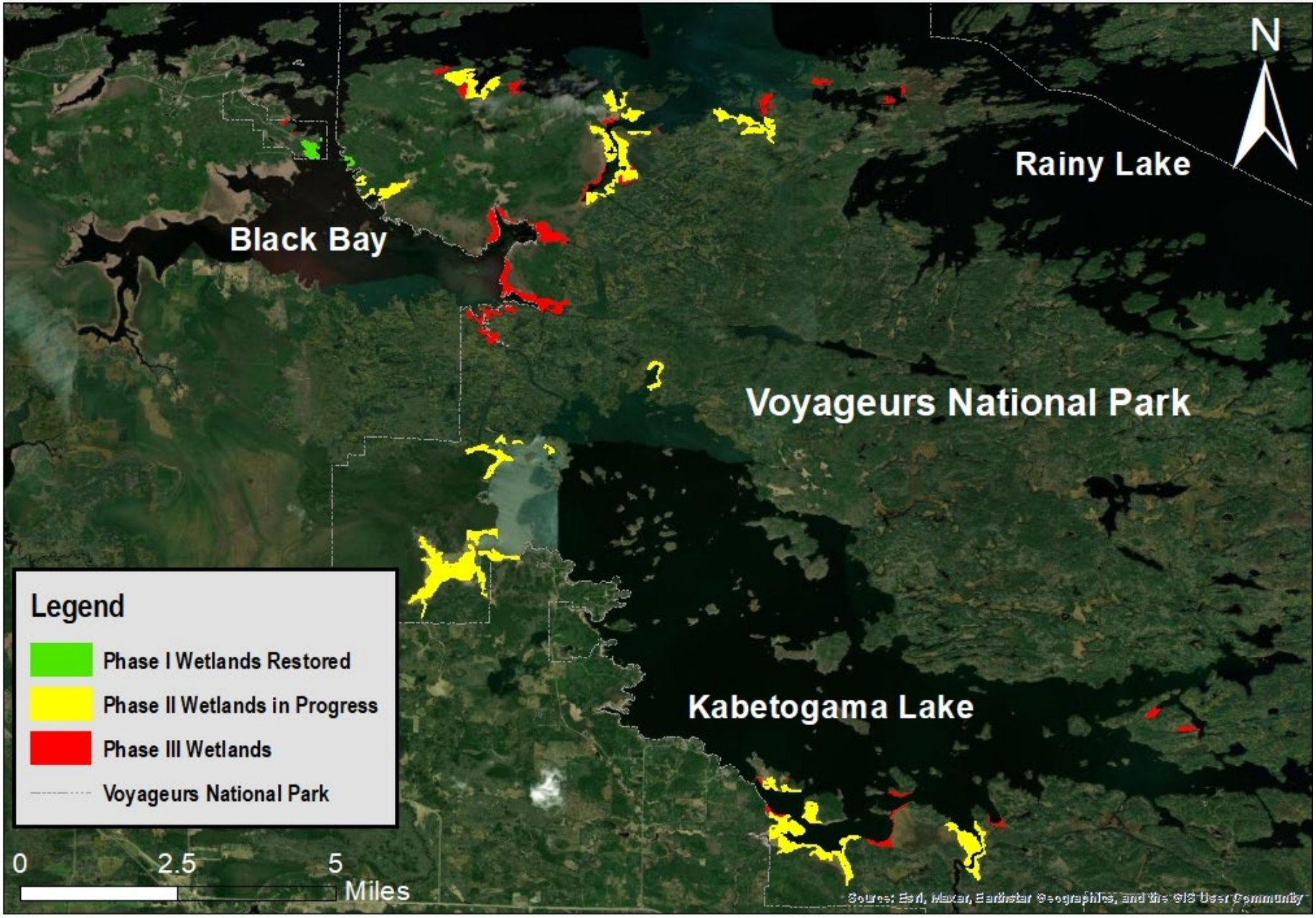
Here are 3 examples of successful restoration efforts during Phases 1&2 of our Wetland Restoration Project



Voyageurs National Park
Minnesota

VNP Wetland Restoration Project, Phase 3

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Voyageurs National Park Wetland Restoration Project, Phase 3 - Letters of Support (attached in order)

1. Voyageurs Conservancy (Christina Hausman, Executive Director)
2. Koochiching Soil & Water Conservation District (Pam Tomevi on behald of Board of Supervisors)
3. Rainy Lake Property Owners Association (Daniel Vellileux, President)
4. Rainy Lake Sportfishing Club (Jason Ellman, President)
5. International Falls, Rainy Lake, and Ranier Convention and Visitors Bureau
6. Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation (Todd Sellers, Executive Director)
7. Rainy Lake Conservancy (Carolyn White Wallis, President)

May 22, 2022

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
State Office Building, Room 55
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear LSOHC Members,

On behalf of Voyageurs Conservancy, I would like to state our full support for "Voyageurs National Park Wetland Restoration Project, Phase 3" as submitted by Voyageurs National Park to the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

As Voyageurs National Park's official philanthropic partner, Voyageurs Conservancy is dedicated to supporting recreation and conservation projects, enhancing education and community engagement, and protecting the wild nature of the park for future generations. Voyageurs Conservancy is a 501c3 nonprofit organization founded in 1965 and based in Minnesota, representing thousands of park supporters, advocates, volunteers, and donors. At its May 16, 2022, meeting, the Conservancy's board of directors approved this letter of support unanimously.

The Conservancy has supported the park's wetland restoration effort since it began in 2016 through direct funding, volunteer and community engagement, and partnership development for the project. The Conservancy has named the wetland restoration project as one of its top priorities in its strategic plan and fundraising campaign and is committed to ongoing philanthropic support for the project. The project is a winning example of public-private partnership in conservation. This ongoing project has been a benefit to Voyageurs National Park and the surrounding communities by reducing invasive species, enhancing fish and wildlife habitat, bringing back culturally significant species like wild rice, and improving recreational opportunities for area visitors.

We hope that you will consider funding the continuation of this valuable project.

Sincerely,

Christina Hausman Rhode
Executive Director

1400 Van Buren Street #200-235, Minneapolis, MN 55413

www.voyageurs.org
612-333-5424

KOOCHICHING
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
501 3RD STREET, SUITE 201 - INTERNATIONAL FALLS, MN 56649
WWW.KOOCHICHINGSWCD.ORG

May 12, 2022

Dear Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council:

We encourage you to support the funding of the proposal "Voyageurs National Park Wetland Restoration Project, Phase 3" submitted by Voyageurs National Park to the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Since the project started in 2016, Voyageurs National Park and their partners have restored or enhanced hundreds of acres of wetland habitats in the Park. These efforts have restored historic beds of wild rice; improved habitat for fish, waterfowl, and species of concern that use wetlands; removed large floating cattail mats that created navigation hazards; increased access to fishing and boating in restored wetlands; and removed many acres of the highly invasive plant, hybrid cattail. Before the start of Voyageurs' Wetland Restoration Project, few techniques existed to combat invasive cattail and restore wetlands to the desired states with more biodiversity and a healthier mix of open water and emergent/submergent plants in which fish and wildlife can thrive. Through trial and error, Park staff and collaborators have developed a suite of techniques that can work in a variety of wetlands sites and conditions. Park staff are now regularly consulted on the techniques they have developed by others in Minnesota and beyond.

This ongoing project has been a benefit to Voyageurs National Park and the surrounding communities by reducing invasive species, enhancing fish and wildlife habitat, and improving recreational opportunities for area visitors. Please give consideration to funding the continuation of this valuable project.

Sincerely,

Pam Tomevi
District Administrator
218-283-1174
Submitted on behalf of the Koochiching Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors

May 19th, 2022

Dear Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council:

We encourage you to support the funding of the proposal “Voyageurs National Park Wetland Restoration Project, Phase 3” submitted by Voyageurs National Park to the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Since the project started in 2016, Voyageurs National Park and their partners have restored or enhanced hundreds of acres of wetland habitats in the Park. These efforts have restored historic beds of wild rice; improved habitat for fish, waterfowl, and species of concern that use wetlands; removed large floating cattail mats that created navigation hazards; increased access to fishing and boating in restored wetlands; and removed many acres of the highly invasive plant, hybrid cattail. Before the start of Voyageurs’ Wetland Restoration Project, few techniques existed to combat invasive cattail and restore wetlands to the desired states with more biodiversity and a healthier mix of open water and emergent/ submergent plants in which fish and wildlife can thrive. Through trial and error, Park staff and collaborators have developed a suite of techniques that can work in a variety of wetlands sites and conditions. Park staff are now regularly consulted on the techniques they have developed by others in Minnesota and beyond.

This ongoing project has been a benefit to Voyageurs National Park and the surrounding communities by reducing invasive species, enhancing fish and wildlife habitat, and improving recreational opportunities for area visitors. Please give consideration to funding the continuation of this valuable project.

Sincerely,

Daniel Vellieux, President

Rainy Lake Property Owners Association

P.O. Box 484, Ranier, MN 56668

RLPOA.org

RAINY LAKE SPORTFISHING CLUB

May 12, 2022

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
95 State Office Building
St Paul, MN 55155

Dear Council Members:

This letter is in support of the continued efforts by the Voyageurs National Park as they begin Phase 3 of their wetland restoration project.

The Rainy Lake Sportfishing Club has been a continued partner with Voyageurs National Park in many aspects that we both share the dedication to restoring, maintaining and enhancing the fisheries both in and out of the park. Through the Park's efforts of improving the habitat for fish, waterfowl and species of concern that use the wetlands by removing cattail mats and invasive plants, we hope that they can continue these efforts.

We recommend the continued financial support to this endeavor by Lessard-Sams.

Sincerely,

Jason M Ell

Jason Ellman, President
Rainy Lake Sportfishing Club
P O Box 888
International Falls, MN 56649

Dear Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council:

We encourage you to support the funding of the proposal “Voyageurs National Park Wetland Restoration Project, Phase 3” submitted by Voyageurs National Park to the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Since the project started in 2016, Voyageurs National Park and their partners have restored or enhanced hundreds of acres of wetland habitats in the Park. These efforts have restored historic beds of wild rice; improved habitat for fish, waterfowl, and species of concern that use wetlands; removed large floating cattail mats that created navigation hazards; increased access to fishing and boating in restored wetlands; and removed many acres of the highly invasive plant, hybrid cattail. Before the start of Voyageurs’ Wetland Restoration Project, few techniques existed to combat invasive cattail and restore wetlands to the desired states with more biodiversity and a healthier mix of open water and emergent/submergent plants in which fish and wildlife can thrive. Through trial and error, Park staff and collaborators have developed a suite of techniques that can work in a variety of wetlands sites and conditions. Park staff are now regularly consulted on the techniques they have developed by others in Minnesota and beyond.

This ongoing project has been a benefit to Voyageurs National Park and the surrounding communities by reducing invasive species, enhancing fish and wildlife habitat, and improving recreational opportunities for area visitors. Please give consideration to funding the continuation of this valuable project.

Sincerely,

The International Falls, Ranier, & Rainy Lake

Convention & Visitors Bureau

Lake of the Woods
water sustainability foundation

Box 112, Kenora, On, Canada P9N 3X1
Telephone: 866-370-8891
Email info@lowwsf.com

May 18, 2022

Dear Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council:

I am writing to encourage you to support the proposal "Voyageurs National Park Wetland Restoration Project, Phase 3" submitted by Voyageurs National Park to the Outdoor Heritage Fund. This long-term project will improve habitat for wildlife and fish, enhance fishing opportunities and restore wetlands to more diverse, natural states.

Since the project started in 2016, Voyageurs National Park and their partners have restored or enhanced hundreds of acres of wetland habitats in the Park. These efforts have restored historic beds of wild rice; improved habitat for fish, waterfowl, and species of concern that use wetlands; removed large floating cattail mats that created navigation hazards; increased access to fishing and boating in restored wetlands; and removed many acres of the highly-invasive hybrid cattail. Before the start of Voyageurs' Wetland Restoration Project, few techniques existed to combat invasive cattail and restore wetlands to the desired states with more biodiversity and a healthier mix of open water and emergent/submergent plants in which fish and wildlife can thrive. In the first two phases of the project, Park staff and collaborators have developed a suite of techniques that can work in a variety of wetland sites and conditions. Park staff are now regularly consulted on the techniques they have developed by others in Minnesota and beyond.

This ongoing project has been a benefit to Voyageurs National Park and the surrounding communities by reducing invasive species, enhancing fish and wildlife habitat, and improving recreational opportunities for area visitors. The work that Voyageurs National Park is doing to restore wetlands, and the techniques that they have developed are models to other organizations and communities looking to do similar restoration work. As an organization who is also involved in invasive species prevention, ecosystem health and bringing science to the public, our Foundation encourages you to fund the continuation of this valuable project.

Your truly,

Todd Sellers
Executive Director
tsellers@lowwsf.com

RAINY LAKE CONSERVANCY

Post Office Box 223

Fort Frances, Ontario P9A 3M6

www.rainylakeconservancy.org

info@rainylakeconservancy.org

807/345-4687 807/274-4684

Preserving the Rainy Lake Watershed

Dear Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council:

The Rainy Lake Conservancy (RLC) encourages the Council to support the funding of the proposal "Voyageurs National Park Wetland Restoration Project, Phase 3" submitted by Voyageurs National Park to the Outdoor Heritage Fund. RLC is a registered Canadian charity with both American and Canadian members and with the purpose to preserve and protect Rainy Lake and the surrounding watershed. Conservancy members accomplish this through science and research, education and community involvement, and land protection.

RLC is committed to supporting programs that protect and enhance the whole Rainy Lake region and consequently, we are pleased to support Voyageurs National Park's application.

Since the project started in 2016, Voyageurs National Park and their partners have restored or enhanced hundreds of acres of wetland habitats in the Park. These efforts have restored historic beds of wild rice; improved habitat for fish, waterfowl, and species of concern that use wetlands; removed large floating cattail mats that created navigation hazards; increased access to fishing and boating in restored wetlands; and removed many acres of the highly invasive plant, hybrid cattail. Before the start of Voyageurs' Wetland Restoration Project, few techniques existed to combat invasive cattail and restore wetlands to the desired states with more biodiversity and a healthier mix of open water and emergent/submergent plants in which fish and wildlife can thrive. Through trial and error, Park staff and collaborators have developed a suite of techniques that can work in a variety of wetlands sites and conditions. Park staff are now regularly consulted on the techniques they have developed by others in Minnesota and beyond.

This ongoing project has been a benefit to Voyageurs National Park and the surrounding communities by reducing invasive species, enhancing fish and wildlife habitat, and improving recreational opportunities for area visitors. Please fund the continuation of this valuable project.

Sincerely,

Carolyn White Wallis

President Rainy Lake Conservancy