

NATIONAL LOON CENTER

Crosslake, Minnesota

www.nationallooncenter.org



NATIONAL LOON CENTER ORIGINS

- During the summer of 2016, the Minnesota Design Team came to Crosslake to help the us identify
 - what are the most valuable things about our community and
 - what improvements we would like to see happen
- Three community sessions were held over a three-month period
 - There were more than 1000 participants in the process including over 150 volunteers
- Community suggestions were tabulated
 - The top ranked item on the community list was the importance of the Whitefish Chain and the related water quality
 - The Loon Center was also a top community request
 - Additional interest areas were a desire to improve connectivity, honor the heritage of the area, maintain the small-town look and feel, and preservation of our lakes and parks



NATIONAL LOON CENTER ORIGINS

- A key outcome of the Minnesota Design Team visit was establishing ***Five Guiding Principles for Crosslake's future***
 - Enhance the unique ecology of Crosslake
 - Create vibrant places that connect people with nature
 - Better balance facilities for driving, biking, boating and walking
 - Provide a diverse mix of housing types and prices
 - Celebrate Crosslake's heritage



NATIONAL LOON CENTER WORK GROUP START-UP

- After the Minnesota Design Team left, a work group was formed to start looking into the possibility of having a National Loon Center in Crosslake
- The work group started meeting in early 2017 and included Jim Anderson, Leah Heggerston and Carla White
- Congressman Rick Nolan has been involved since the beginning
 - He has been a key champion in finding solutions to some of the most challenging work that needs to be done



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships

Fosters community sustainability through citizen-driven University partnerships and sustainable development projects in agriculture, tourism and resilient communities, natural resources, and clean energy.

- In March of 2017, meet with the Molly Zins of the UM CRSDP
 - Started to discuss the process of submitting a project brief
 - Submitted the application in late April
- June - we were notified the application had been accepted
- Phase 1 Community Input
 - July 2017 through January 2018
- Phase 2 Market Feasibility Study
 - January 2018 through May 2018



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships

Phase 1 Community Input

- July through September - Professor Virajita Singh and graduate student Joe Polacek
 - Started planning for the community meetings
- Community meetings in September, October and December
 - Asked the community for input on all aspects of a NLC in Crosslake
 - The community input session feedback is detailed in the Master Plan document
 - The Master Plan is available on the NLC website

We are very thankful to the UM CRSDP's work on this project!



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships

Phase 2 Market and Feasibility Study

- January 2018 through May 2018 – Professor Bill Gartner and graduate student Elliot Charette
- Gathered data from a variety of sources including the National Eagle Center in Wabasha MN, the Wolf Center in Ely MN, the National Owl Center in Houston MN
- All data was used to help us understand if a National Loon Center in Crosslake MN will be able to be self-sustaining and answer the question “if we built it, will they come” – YES!
- Completed in May 2018



GRANTS

- National Park Service
 - The National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program supports successful partnerships with communities across America in achieving their conservation and outdoor recreation visions.
- Sourcewell (aka NJPA)
 - Provided funding for UofM grad student (~\$15,000)
- Open Oceans Trust Grant
 - The Trustees manage the approximately \$20B of settlement funds from the Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill of April, 2010
 - Submitted a project idea in May, 2018
 - Expecting more information this Fall



GRANTS – LCCMR

- Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)

- The function of the LCCMR is to make funding recommendations to the legislature for special environment and natural resource projects, primarily from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)
- <https://www.lccmr.leg.mn/>
- Lottery funds are directed to the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)
- Submitted final proposal on April 11
- Presented to the committee on June 27
- Notified that we have been allocated our full ask of \$4M on July 18



GRANTS – LCCMR

- **Next steps:**

- Draft of the NLC Work Plan is due August 27
- LCCMR will finalize the legislative Bill language Nov 13 and Dec 4
- A presentation will be made to the legislature for consideration during the legislative sessions beginning Jan 8
- The bill will be presented to the Governor for signature into law
- The LCCMR review and final approval of workplans would occur in June 2019
- After successful completion of these steps, projects could begin around July 1, 2019



NEW INITIATIVES

Special thank you to Carrol Henderson (MNDNR) and our partners at the US Fish and Wildlife Service for working on initiatives to help our loons via the NLC!

Funding has been requested from the BP Oil Spill Settlement via MN DNR



US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE BP OIL SPILL SETTLEMENT VIA MN DNR

US FWS is supportive of measures that will engage two citizen science programs at the National Loon Center that could play an important part in:

- Producing more loons
- Lower loon mortality



US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE BP OIL SPILL SETTLEMENT VIA MN DNR

Development of a loon-friendly conservation registry for lake associations

- Carrol requested \$50,000 per year for three years (\$150,000 total) to support a project coordinator managing this program at the National Loon Center.
- This position would work with the participating lake associations to help them develop loon conservation plans, activities (i.e. nesting platforms, counts, data to be collected and submitted at the end of the season), and a formalized data collection process.
- As Carrol highlighted, "this is citizen science at its best."



US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE BP OIL SPILL SETTLEMENT VIA MN DNR

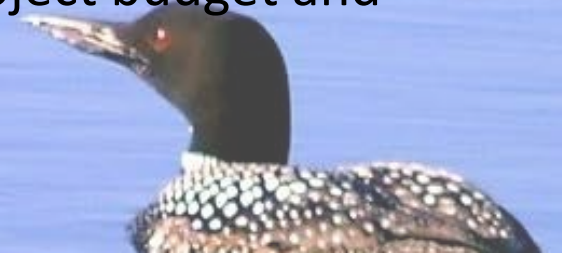
Get-The-Lead-Out Program

- Developing a loon friendly program that would include a \$300,000 exhibit for the National Loon Center.
- The Pollution Control Agency would deliver some of the program activities and events that the Loon Center that lake associations can collaborate with and help promote.
- Potential funding would likely be in place by next June/July 2019.



PARTNERS

- Widseth Smith Nolting –
 - Architect and Engineers for the project
 - Key in helping with LCCMR grant, project planning, interfacing with the US ACE,
 - Developed our 30 word project summary for the LCCMR Grant application
“National Loon Center’s vision of habitat protection, environmental recreation and interactive research will establish Minnesota as the premiere destination to experience the freshwater ecosystem we share with all native wildlife.”
 - Developed our “Splash Video” that will help us share our story with potential partners, funders and collaborators
- CLC SBDC, the Brainerd Lakes Chamber and Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corp
 - Helping with the Business Plan including development of the project budget and financial forecast



VIDEO

Splash Video

Lakeland Public Television story



TIMELINE FOR THE NLC

Spring and Summer 2018

- Marketing and feasibility study (University of MN) - completed
- Memorandum of Understanding with US Army Corp of Engineers was signed on May 31 – completed
- Development of a business plan assisted by the Initiative Foundation, Central Lakes College Small Business Development Center, and the Brainerd Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce – in process
- Real Estate Application with the US Army Corp of Engineers – submitted - in process



TIMELINE FOR THE NLC

Interns and Volunteers

- Discussions are underway with **Humphrey School** about possible partnerships with Fall and Spring capstone classes
 - Project ideas are focusing on fundraising planning and exhibit design
- Two **interns** joined us over the summer to help with marketing and exhibits
- One UofM **graduate** is managing our social media



TIMELINE FOR THE NLC

Fall 2018-2019

- Site development planning to include:
 - shoreline protection, public docks, boat launches with invasion species interactive education, interpretive parks and trails system, outdoor exhibits, recreational research outdoor attraction, observation areas, Get-the-Lead-Out fishing pier education, public bathrooms and shower facility & boathouse
- Engineering and Architecture
 - for the site and National Loon Center Facility and accessory structures
- Fundraising



TIMELINE FOR THE NLC

Spring 2020

- Construction of the National Loon Center facility (15,000 sf) with Operations and Maintenance of the building

Spring 2021

- **GRAND OPENING**



NATIONAL LOON CENTER FOUNDATION

James Anderson, President

Leah Heggerston, Vice President

Matt Kilian, Vice President Marketing

Carla White, Secretary

Mary Kolesar, Business Planning

Kevin Roberg, Fundraising

Melanie Underbrink, Fundraising



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Questions?

