



International Wolf Center



2023 Capital Investment Request

The International Wolf Center opened in 1993 after State bond funds and donor support paid for the renovation of an old U.S. Forest Service Visitor Center to house the Center’s exhibits. The building is now owned and managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Lease fees from the International Wolf Center pay for repairs to the building, but several systems have reached the end of their life span (30+ years) and need to be updated and/or replaced. The International Wolf Center is seeking bond support to allow the DNR to make these critical repairs to allow our educational work to continue.

TOTAL FUNDING NEED\$1,524,036

HVAC replacement\$614,250

- Replace/update HVAC control system
- Replace boilers serving large exhibit and common area
- Replace the main air handler serving large exhibit/common area
- Replace grade mounted RTU serving the Auditorium



Right: The top priority for the Center is to replace the 30-year-old HVAC system. The system is inefficient and increasingly difficult to maintain. In 2020, the Center experienced 58 days with inadequate heating/cooling. In 2021, that number increased to 73 days.

Roof replacement\$404,250

- Shingle replacement
- Insulation replacement
- Ice and water shield

Right: A leaking roof is damaging ceilings.



Far right: An ice and water shield is needed to help mitigate damage from harsh winters.



General drainage improvements.....\$44,000

Piping, grading, catchbasins, etc.

Right: In 2019, a spring flood pushed up water in a pipe meant solely for electrical conduit.

Far right: The same flood left water standing where the Center's new exhibit was being installed.



Entrance/Lobby.....\$366,536

Improve accessibility
Improve visitor access/security
Sidewalk repairs

Building was constructed before modern ADA standards. The entrance and lobby need to be remodeled for accessibility, security and visitor flow.



Other exterior repairs/site improvements.....\$95,000

Window replacements
Re-stain building exterior



Far left: The Center's exterior is in need of new stain.

Left: Several windows need to be replaced. Some leak and/or don't seal completely.



Feb. 10, 2023

Senator Sandra L. Pappas, Committee Chair
Room 2113 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave. West
St. Paul, MN 55155

Ms. Rachel Carlson, Committee Administrator
Senate Capital Investment Committee
Room 2113 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave. West
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: International Wolf Center (Asset Preservation Bonding request)

Dear Senator Pappas:

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your leadership and support for the International Wolf Center's bonding appropriation request of \$1,525,000 during the 2023 legislative session.

The Wolf Centers mission is to advance the survival of wolf populations through teaching people about wolves, their relationship to wildlands and the human role in their future.

The Center has served as a premier educational and informational resource throughout Minnesota and internationally since 1993. Additionally, the Wolf Center is a critical tourism destination serving Ely and the surrounding region. More than 40,000 visitors annually participate in a variety of educational and recreational activities at the landmark facility.

The International Wolf Center leases a state-owned building in need of extensive repairs and renovation.

The repairs can no longer be delayed without a significant impact on our staff and visitors. A complete replacement of the Center's HVAC system, a new roof, and exterior renovations that include repairs to the building are necessary to provide a safe, accessible, and well running operation for staff and the public.

On behalf of the International Wolf Centers board of directors I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration and support of this essential request.

Sincerely,

Judy Hunter
Board Chair
International Wolf Center

Grant Spickelmier
Executive Director
International Wolf Center

wolf.org

Interpretive Center – 1396 Highway 169, Ely, MN 55731-8129 * Phone: 218-365-4695 Fax: 218-365-3318

Administrative and Outreach Office – 7100 Northland Circle N, Suite 205, Minneapolis, MN 55428-1500 * Phone: 763-560-7374 Fax: 763-560-7368



Ely City Hall, 209 E Chapman St, Ely MN 55731

February 3, 2023

Senator Sandra L. Pappas, Committee Chair
Room 2113 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave. West
St. Paul, MN 55155

Ms. Rachel Carlson, Committee Administrator
Senate Capital Investment Committee
Room 2113 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave. West
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: International Wolf Center- Asset Preservation Project- Letter of Support

Dear Senator Pappas:

The City of Ely is supporting the International Wolf Center's request for capital budget consideration in the 2023 legislative session. The Wolf Center building requires approximately \$1.5 million in improvements. It is critical to the tourism economy in Ely that the facility remains viable.

The Wolf Center has been in Ely since 1989 and serves more than 40,000 visitors on an annual basis. The facility is a major draw for out of state and international visitors and has a membership that is 70% people from outside the state of Minnesota. The Wolf Center has a full-time staff of eight with an additional ten part time employees and additional paid internships. This dedicated group provides an exceptional and unique education opportunity to our visitors.

The State-owned building requires HVAC replacement, full exterior renovation and drainage improvements to ensure the building continues to serve the 40,000 annual visitors and continues to be one of Ely's most popular destinations for tourism.

We thank the Senate and House of Representatives for the continued support of our projects and hope that this legislative session can benefit the needed improvements at the International Wolf Center Facility as well as the Ely Regional Trailhead Facility and the West End Redevelopment Projects.

Sincerely,

City of Ely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidi Omerza", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Heidi Omerza, Mayor

Cc: Senator Grant Hauschild



1600 Sheridan Street
Ely Minnesota 55731
Ely.org – 218-365-6123

Ely.Live.Work.Play.

February 8, 2023

Senator Sandra L. Pappas, Committee Chair
Room 2113 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave. West
St. Paul, MN 55155

Ms. Rachel Carlson, Committee Administrator
Senate Capital Investment Committee
Room 2113 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave. West
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Pappas:

The Ely Chamber of Commerce fully supports the International Wolf Center's funding request for approximately \$1.5 million dollars. Their request includes HVAC replacement and upgrades, roof replacement, drainage improvements, entry security and accessibility improvements, and exterior maintenance and repairs. These items are required to maintain a safe facility for staff and visitors.

The International Wolf Center provides valuable information and educational opportunities, not only to our community, but across the world. The facility houses a variety of interactive displays, plus an ambassador wolf pack. Knowledgeable staff and interpreters provide additional information to enhance the visitor experience.

The Ely Chamber of Commerce serves as the area's only visitor center. Each year thousands of visitors pass through our door. As our Information Receptionists greet visitors, many already have plans to stop at the International Wolf Center. For the few that are not familiar with it, they are so excited to hear about the many activities the International Wolf Center offers. Frequently, visitors are coming solely to visit the International Wolf Center, so it is not just an attraction, but a destination. We feel extremely fortunate to have the International Wolf Center as part of our community.

We hope the Capital Investment Committee, along with the House of Representatives, will support the International Wolf Center's funding request. The International Wolf Center's work benefits both Ely and the state of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eva Sebesta", written over a large, light-colored circular mark.

Eva Sebesta
Executive Director



Armstrong High School

Robbinsdale Area Schools
10635 36th Avenue North
Plymouth, MN 55441
763-504-8800 | ahs.rdale.org

February 7, 2023

Senator Sandra L. Pappas, Committee Chair
Room 2113 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave. West
St. Paul, MN 55155

Ms. Rachel Carlson, Committee Administrator
Senate Capital Investment Committee
Room 2113 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave. West
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: International Wolf Center- Asset Preservation Project- Letter of Support

Dear Senator Pappas:

I am writing this letter in support of the International Wolf Center's request for capital budget consideration in the 2023 legislative session. The Wolf Center's building requires approximately \$1.5 million in improvements. The State-owned building requires HV AC replacement, full exterior renovation and drainage improvements to continue serving the many visitors and students that visit Ely and the International Wolf Center each year.

My relationship with the IWC is twofold. I volunteer for the center's educational mission by working booths at events such as the Minnesota State Fair, where I interact with visitors from throughout the state, and beyond. Many who stop by the booth do so because of prior visits to the wolf center and want to share what a fun and valuable experience it was for them. Others are curious about the Center and its mission, wanting to learn more about the role of wolves in the state ecosystem, and what they might experience in a trip to Ely to visit the center.

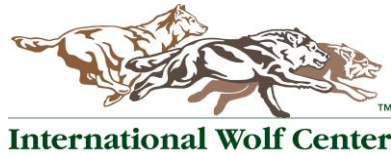
The second, and most important relationship with the Center, is a result of my role as an environmental science and ecology teacher in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. I have utilized programming from the center as a way to better educate myself in material I then share with my students, and as a learning experience for a group of students each year that take a trip to Ely with me to experience the Center firsthand. Many of my students have never traveled outside the metropolitan area, and the trip is an experience of a lifetime for them. Not only do we stay overnight at the center and do activities there, the center also takes the students out to experience more of what the north woods has to offer. When I open registration for the trip students line up at my door with permission slips in hand to make sure that they make the cut. Some students register for the classes I offer, in part, to have the opportunity to be on that trip. This helps me to develop a love for the natural resources that Minnesota has to offer in my students. And some of my students then share that with their parents. At conferences I hear from many parents who have also taken a trip to Ely and the IWC to share that experience with their children.

I see so much value in the educational mission of the International Wolf Center, and I want to see it continue for many years to come. It is for this reason that I would like to see the state fund the improvements needed to ensure a safe, healthy building for visitors long into the future.

Sincerely,

Kathy Kneeland

Robbinsdale Armstrong AP Environmental Science Teacher, Science Department Chair



10 February 2023

Senator Sandra L. Pappas, Committee Chair
Room 2113 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave. West
St. Paul, MN 55155

Ms. Rachel Carlson, Committee Administrator
Senate Capital Investment Committee
Room 2113 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave. West
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Letter of support for International Wolf Center

Dear Senator Pappas and Ms. Carlson:

My name is Lori Schmidt, the wolf curator for the International Wolf Center in Ely and I want to share my experience, insight and support for the projects forwarded by the Center for the upcoming Bonding project review.

In 1981, I was a Vermilion Community College student working as a maintenance laborer for the US Forest Service's "Voyageur Visitor Center", which is the current home of the International Wolf Center in Ely. I can certainly attest to the age of the HVAC and the roofing system from a portion of that facility built by the US Forest Service in 1967.

By 1989, I became the wolf curator at the Center to help establish a science-based, educational facility during a time when Minnesota's wolf population was growing beyond the northern forest region. The need for wolf education and realistic discussions about wolf/human interactions were at the forefront of the scientific community and is core to the Center's mission. Annually, thousands of visitors come to the Center and even more classrooms across the world have access to educational programs. As the Center's request shows, accessibility for visitors is an important component.

The Center also associates with many NGO, private and public agencies to maximize resource efficiencies. The ambassador wolf program has a strong connection with donors and many of the projects employed in animal care have benefited from external fundraising and volunteer efforts. I continue to provide Vermilion Community College students opportunities to gain practical field experience in issues related to forest and wildlife management for the next generation of resource professionals.

I want to thank you for your consideration of the Center's Bonding request and can personally attest to the many benefits that result in facility investments.

Sincerely,

wolf.org

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