

# FINAL REPORT

SEP 21 2001

## 1999 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2001

**TITLE:** Wildlife Tourism

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Carrol Henderson

**ORGANIZATION:** Department of Natural Resources

**ADDRESS:** Box 25, DNR, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155

**WEB SITE ADDRESS:** www.dnr.state.mn.us

**FUND:** Environmental Trust Fund

**LEGAL CITATION:** ML 99, Chap. 231, Sec. 16, Subd. 7(c).

**APPROPRIATION AMOUNT:** \$ 250,000

### Overall Project Outcome and Results

Wildlife tourism is estimated to be a \$ 400 million industry per year in Minnesota. This project provided an array of workshops, grants, web site development, information efforts and advertising to accelerate the process by which Minnesota is becoming a more significant national destination for wildlife tourism.

A total of 19 workshops were held for 286 people to teach them the basics about wildlife tourism as an industry that supports the preservation and wise management of natural resources on public forest, wildlife and park lands. Six field trips were also carried out for 180 people to introduce them to a variety of wildlife watching destinations. A total of 200 wildlife watching signs were posted at the entrance to public lands that were identified in the book *Traveler's Guide to Wildlife in Minnesota*. A total of 12 communities utilized grants to develop wildlife watching promotional materials for their local areas.

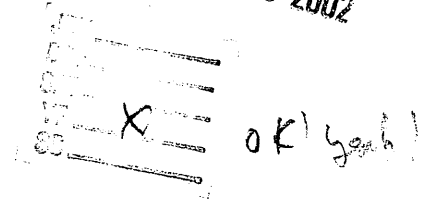
### Project Results Use and Dissemination

This information has been used in local communities in development or promotion of the Pine to Prairie Birding Trail, Great River Birding Trail (Mississippi River corridor), Minnesota River Birding Trail, and in creation of local birding festivals. Some of the lessons learned from this process have been written up as a tourism curriculum for local communities and local colleges. It is called the *Saga of Grackle Junction*. This curriculum was written and developed by the Nongame Wildlife Program and teaches the process by which wildlife tourism can be developed in a community. National advertising exposure about wildlife watching opportunities in Minnesota also appeared in *Audubon* magazine, *Birder's World*, *Wild Bird*, and *National Wildlife* magazine. Wildlife watching information was also incorporated into information and maps of the state's Wildlife Management Areas on the DNR web site.

# FINAL REPORT

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Date of Report: September 13, 2001  
LCMR Work Program Final Report  
Date of Workprogram Approval: June 16, 1999  
Project Completion Date: June 30, 2001



## LCMR Work Program 1999

### I. PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota Wildlife Tourism Initiative

**Project Manager:** Carrol Henderson  
**Affiliation:** Division of Ecological Services, Department of Natural Resources  
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St. Paul, MN 55155  
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**Web Page address:** <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us>

**Total Biennial Project Budget:** \$250,000

<b>\$LCMR:</b>	\$250,000	<b>\$ Match: *</b>	\$46,589
<b>-\$LCMR Amount Spent</b>	<u>\$250,000</u>	<b>-\$ Match Amount Spent:</b>	\$46,589
<b>= \$LCMR Balance:</b>	\$ 0	<b>= \$ Match Balance</b>	0

\* See Context for supplemental funding support that has been provided by the Nongame Wildlife Program from other funding sources

**A. Legal Citation: ML 99, Chap. 231, Sec.16, Subd. 7(c).**

#### Appropriation Language:

#### Minnesota Wildlife Tourism Initiative \$250,000

\$125,000 the first year and \$125,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources to develop, implement and evaluate a project focusing on wildlife tourism as a sustainable industry in Minnesota in cooperation with the office of tourism.

**B. Status of Match Requirement: N/A**

## II. and III. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY

Wildlife tourism is estimated to be a \$ 400 million industry per year in Minnesota. This project provided an array of workshops, grants, web site development, information efforts and advertising to accelerate the process by which Minnesota is becoming a more significant national destination for wildlife tourism.

A total of 19 workshops were held for 286 people to teach them the basics about wildlife tourism as an industry that supports the preservation and wise management of natural resources on public forest, wildlife and park lands. Six field trips were also carried out for 180 people to introduce them to a variety of wildlife watching destinations. A total of 200 wildlife watching signs were posted at the entrance to public lands that were identified in the book Traveler's Guide to Wildlife in Minnesota. A total of 12 communities utilized grants to develop wildlife watching promotional materials for their local areas.

This information has been used in local communities in development or promotion of the Pine to Prairie Birding Trail, Great River Birding Trail (Mississippi River corridor), Minnesota River Birding Trail, and in creation of local birding festivals. Some of the lessons learned from this process have been written up as a tourism curriculum for local communities and local colleges. It is called the Saga of Grackle Junction. This curriculum was written and developed by the Nongame Wildlife Program and teaches the process by which wildlife tourism can be developed in a community. National advertising exposure about wildlife watching opportunities in Minnesota also appeared in Audubon magazine, Birder's World, Wild Bird, and National Wildlife magazine. Wildlife watching information was also incorporated into information and maps of the state's Wildlife Management Areas on the DNR web site.

## IV: OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

	<b>Result 1:</b>	LCMR Budget:	\$ 19,714
Expended:	\$ 19,714		
Balance:	\$ 0		
Completion date:	October 25, 2000		

A total of 19 wildlife tourism workshops have been carried out with an attendance of 286 people. There was a registration charge of \$15 per participant to help offset the cost of the workshops.

	<b>Result 2:</b>	LCMR Budget:	\$ 6,000
Expended:	\$ 6,000		
Balance:	\$ 0		
Completion date:	May 23, 2001		

A total of 6 wildlife tourism field trips will be carried out for workshop participants for an

estimated total of 180 people. There was a fee of \$15 per participant to help offset the cost of the field trips. The number of field trips needed is less than anticipated originally because the number of participants per workshop is 17 rather than 30. ~~Any balance remaining will be used to provide additional resource materials to field trip participants.~~

Field trips were held in 2000 in conjunction with the wildlife tourism workshops at Bemidji, Mille Lacs Lake and Duluth. In April of 2001, two field trips were held for a total of 81 participants at Bemidji and Brainerd and one additional field trip was held in May of 2001 at Ely.

	<b>Result 3:</b>	LCMR Budget:	\$3,632
Expended:		\$3,632	
Balance:		\$ 0	
Completion date:		1 May 2000	

Develop a 20-minute slide program and script and make multiple copies that can be used by DNR and Tourism staff at wildlife tourism workshops and other tourism-related events.

A basic slide program has been developed for these workshops, but since each region has different habitats and different featured species of wildlife and wildflowers, the slide programs have been individually adapted for each workshop.

	<b>Result 4.</b>	LCMR Budget:	\$ <u>900</u>
Expended:		<u>900</u>	
Balance:		<u>0</u>	

Completion date: June 30, 2000

Print and post 200 "Wildlife Viewing Site" signs on public highways to identify locations featured in the Traveler's Guide to Wildlife in Minnesota. This component was - addressed in the spring of 2001 through a cooperative effort with the Division of Wildlife, Division of Parks and Scientific and Natural Areas Program. Those programs provided the posts and posted the signs at no cost to the Nongame Wildlife Program so the cost of this result is less than anticipated

	<b>Result 5.</b>	LCMR Budget:	\$ <u>49,754</u>
Expended:		\$ <u>49,754</u>	
Balance:		\$ <u>0</u>	
Completion date:		June 30, 2001	

Printing, acquisition and/or product development of handouts, maps, and brochures for workshop and field trip participants. This includes development or purchase of PRIM and Wildlife Management Area maps, bird and wildlife checklists, and resource lists as well as contracting with experts to develop regionalized checklists. Eight products will be

developed or provided for participants.

**Result 6.** LCMR Budget: \$30,000  
Expended: \$ 30,000  
Balance: \$ 0  
Completion date: June 1, 2001

Cost share for special birding or wildlife events/products/or promotions by local coalitions of chambers of commerce, conservation groups and the hospitality industry, e.g. development and printing of regional birding corridor maps/brochures or wildlife festivals. This will involve 50-50 cost share with participating groups. Outcome = co-sponsorship of 12 wildlife tourism events/products/or promotions. This process is now completed and 12 projects have been carried out through coordination provided by the Minnesota Office of Tourism.

Fargo/Moorhead CVB, consumer advertising, \$600  
Houston Chamber of Commerce, birding brochure, \$1064  
Iron Trail CVB, birding brochure, \$2600; Web enhancement, \$400  
Itasca Area Lakes Assn, consumer advertising, \$1071; birding brochure, \$1303  
web enhancement, \$500  
Lake City Chamber of Commerce, birding brochure, \$3000  
Lake of the Woods Area Tourism, brochure, \$3,000  
Mille Lacs Area Tourism, consumer advertising, \$1472; birding brochure, \$1150  
MN Ornithologists Union, brochure, \$2500  
Park Rapids Chamber of Commerce, consumer advertising, \$2000; brochure, \$1000  
Thief River Falls Area Chamber, birding brochure, \$2,000  
Whitefish Area Lodging Assn, birding brochure, \$2,000

Copies of promotional pieces developed are attached.

**Result 7** LCMR Budget \$100,000  
Expended: 100,000  
Balance: \$ 0  
Completion date: June 1, 2001

Expenses for advertising wildlife tourism, wildlife-oriented familiarization tours, preparation, participation and organization for the 2000 and 2001 National Watchable Wildlife Conferences and promotional products by the Office of Tourism. This included an 8-page advertorial promoting wildlife tourism in Minnesota in the April 2000 issue of Audubon magazine and a 10 page advertorial guide in the 2001 April issue of Audubon. This magazine has a national circulation of 450,000. In 2000, a total of \$41,700 was expended for the Audubon advertorial and for 17,500 over-runs of which were used for distribution to travelers interested in nature travel in Minnesota. In 2001, a total of \$47,750 was used

for a 10-page Audubon advertorial and 7,500 overruns were printed for distribution. Small (1/6 page) Travel ads were also purchased for National Wildlife magazine, Wild Bird and Birder's World, totaling \$5,198. They have a circulation of 566,000, 116,000, and 78,000, respectively. In June 2001, \$732 was used to host a travel writer from Better Homes and Gardens Magazine for a familiarization trip on the Minnesota River Birding Trail.

	<b>Result 8</b>	LCMR Budget	\$30,000
Expended:	<u>30,000</u>		
Balance:	\$ 0		
Completion date: June 30, 2001			

A layer of wildlife tourism information is being added to a GIS-based program that is being developed for state wildlife management areas (WMAs). This effort is underway and would cover the cost of adding a wildlife viewing opportunity information layer to the DNR's Wildlife GIS project for 100 WMAs in a way that would make them accessible for on-line use. This will include all of the Wildlife Management Areas in Olmsted, Stevens, Traverse, Pope, Nicollet, Polk, and Kittson counties and the Whitewater Wildlife Management Area. This information is posted on the DNR web site.

<u>Result 9</u>	LCMR Budget	\$10,000
	Expended:	<u>\$ 10,000</u>
	Balance:	\$ 0
Completion date: June 30, 2001		

The Office of Tourism carried out a project evaluation to determine the effectiveness of promoting wildlife tourism ~~among the project participants~~. This involved measuring the awareness created in marketing by wildlife tour promotion. A copy of the final report is attached and indicates that there is significant potential for the growth and development of wildlife tourism in Minnesota.

**V. DISSEMINATION:** the information developed for this project was presented at the 19 workshops that were part of the program. Presentations will also be made at meetings of the Minnesota Resort Association, Minnesota Association of Innkeepers, Office of Tourism and Department of Natural Resources to provide updates on the progress of this effort. Web site information will be available through the Office of Tourism web site.

## VI. CONTEXT

**A. Significance:** Wildlife tourism is a \$383 million industry in Minnesota and there is an important need to share information about wildlife tourism with the hospitality industry and local chambers of commerce so that they can respond to the growing opportunities that exist related to wildlife viewing demands. This is the first time that the Department of

Natural Resources' Section of Wildlife and the Office of Tourism have cooperated to address this opportunity area. The long term benefit for wildlife is that it helps local communities recognize the importance that nearby public wildlife lands can have in stimulating the economy of rural areas where little other tourism occurs.

**B. Time:** This was a two-year project.

**C. Budget Context:** Supplemental funding for this project was provided by the Minnesota Office of Tourism through the staff time that is being provided by Colleen Tollefson and by her five regional staff tourism specialists for participation in the tourism workshops, management of the grants program, and general project coordination regarding the fam tours and planning for the Watchable Wildlife Conference. Office of Tourism staff coordinated the advertising and advertorial production and media fams. Additional funding was provided as staff support from the Nongame Wildlife Program from the main checkoff account (185-600), the general fund supplemental appropriation (100-613) and the Trust Fund appropriation (030-605). The Nongame Wildlife Program has expended \$46,569 on this project in addition to the LCMR funds provided.

1.

**BUDGET:**

<b>Personnel*</b>	<b>\$ 19,400</b>
<b>Equipment</b>	<b>\$ 6,000</b>
<b>Acquisition</b>	<b>\$ -0-</b>
<b>Development</b>	<b>\$ -0-</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>\$224,600</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>

\*Salary money included \$15,000 that was used to develop the wildlife tourism information layer for the Wildlife Management Area GIS data base that is being created by the Section of Wildlife (contracted services); and \$4,400 was used to fund a research analyst position to carry out the evaluation component of this project.

**VII. COOPERATION:**

The following individuals are the cooperators have carried out planning and implementation of this project. LCMR dollars are not required for their salaries. Carrol Henderson, Department of Natural Resources. Colleen Tollefson, Office of Tourism. Dennis Bremer, President, Minnesota Association of Innkeepers. John Cavanaugh, President, Minnesota Resort Association

**VIII. LOCATION:** Workshops have taken place at Bemidji on September 29, 1999, Mille Lacs/Garrison on October 5, 1999, Duluth on October 12, 1999, Hennepin County (Elm Creek Park Reserve) on November 5, 1999, Red Wing on February 16, Mankato (Swan

Lake) on April 11, Ortonville on April 12, Detroit Lakes on May 2, Warroad on May 3, Crosslake-Manhattan Beach on May 16, Fergus Falls on May 17, Lake Shetek on June 28, St. Croix River/Taylors Falls August 2, Thief River Sept. 12, Ely on Sept. 20 and at Grand Marais on October 25.

**IX. Reporting requirements:** A final work program report and associated products will be submitted by September 13, 2001.