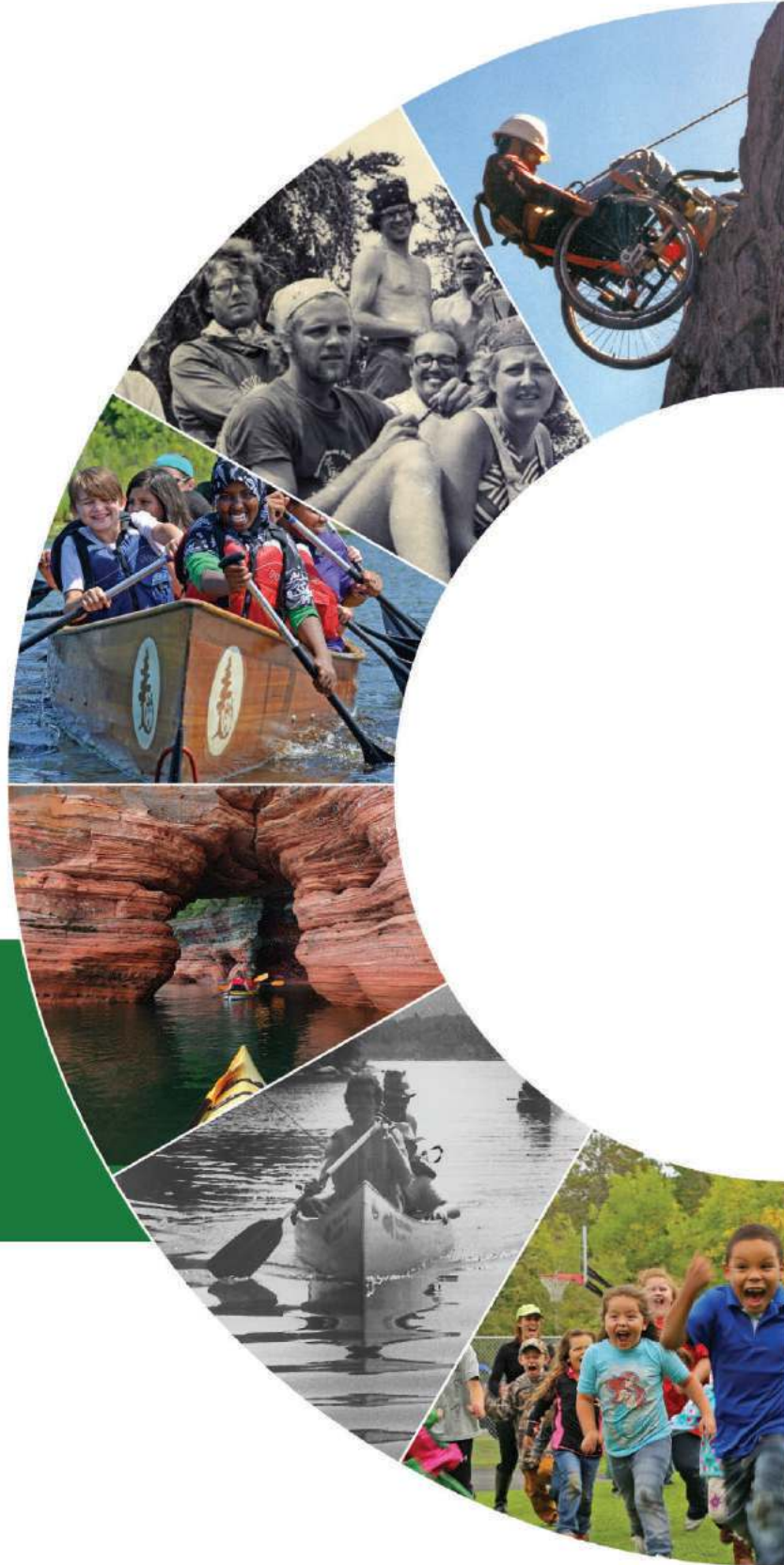




Wilderness
Inquiry

2018 | ANNUAL
REPORT



Bringing people together in the wilderness since 1978

**ADVENTURE
IS OUR MEDIUM
INCLUSION
IS OUR METHOD
INTEGRATION
IS OUR MISSION**

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Dear Friends,

In 2018 we marked the 40th anniversary of Wilderness Inquiry. With your support, more than 40,000 people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities paddled, hiked, and traveled with us across Minnesota and around the globe. These inclusive adventures emphasize our common humanity, connection to nature, and the power of inclusion in the outdoors.

A long-time participant shared, "WI's message of inclusivity left a strong impression on many aspects of my life, and I thank you for that. There is a place for everyone in the wilderness, in a canoe, and in a classroom. When given a chance, anyone can find a place where they belong."



Thank you for being a part of our community and sharing the adventure with us!

Greg Lais
Executive Director

Bill Schmoker
Board Chair



**Community
Integration**

through shared adventures

Education

through place-based learning

Employment

through skills training and connections

**Health and
Wellness**

through active outdoor lifestyles

Connecting people of all ages, backgrounds,
and abilities to the natural world and each
other through shared outdoor adventures.

40,222

People served in 2018

19,335

People of color



3,567

Individuals with disabilities



575

Adventures worldwide



Highlights of Our Journey

Since 1978, we have served more than 500,000 people from all walks of life, from the headwaters of the Mississippi to the headwaters of the Nile. People with physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities, as well as people of all races and creeds, have come together to “Share the Adventure.” We are united in the spirit of adventure and transformed by the beauty and power of Mother Nature. This thirst for discovering our world with others—who on the surface are different than us—has fueled the passion at Wilderness Inquiry.

This passion comes from our core values, values that were there from the beginning and that have driven our success. We value inclusion, treating everyone like a first class citizen, and getting things done, together. These values were forged on the trail in the face of stiff headwinds, driving rain, and huge whitecaps.

As we close the book on 2018, we celebrate 40 years of inclusive adventures and life-changing experiences in the outdoors. Thank you for your support and belief in Wilderness Inquiry’s mission of integration.



1978

First trip to Boundary Waters.

Developed the Seven Steps to Social Integration, leading to the Universal Program Participation model, our formula for inclusive programs.

1982

First trip overseas to Australia.

1988



1989

WI honored at the White House by First Lady Barbara Bush.



1991

Built our first 10-person Voyageur canoe.

1993

Established Families Together to provide integrated outdoor adventures for families from all walks of life.



Memorandum of Understanding with National Park Service, US Forest Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and US Army Corps of Engineers.

1997

1999

First major capital campaign as WI moves into its current HQ with combined office and warehouse space. “Martha’s Place” is purchased and dedicated as a house for trail staff.



Established Outdoor Career Academy (OCA) to prepare youth for jobs in the outdoor industry.



Celebrated 40 years of inclusive adventures. Over the past four decades, WI has served over 500,000 people.

2011

First annual Great River Race to Close the Achievement Gap.



2015

2018



Launched the next generation fleet of Voyageur canoes, designed in-house. Wilderness Inquiry served 40,222 people through shared outdoor adventures in its 40th year.

2010

Received the Excellence Award from the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits.

2008



Launched Canoemobile, reaching 280,000 youth in more than 60 cities coast to coast since 2008.

2000

Developed the "Rickshaw," making trails more accessible for individuals using wheelchairs.

2007



Established Apostle Islands Base Camp at Little Sand Bay.



500,000+


People served since 1978

10,224

Adventures worldwide

\$56.4 MILLION

Raised and earned



*“I felt so alive,
like I was one
with nature!”*


—RAY, AGE 9

Canoemobile

Our “floating classroom” provides place-based learning opportunities for young people in Minnesota and across the country. The Canoemobile experience is a land-and-water journey transporting students and teachers into a school without walls, introducing young people to the wonders of the natural world. Paddling in 24-foot Voyageur canoes, students explore the geological history of cities, investigate aquatic plant and animal life, and learn about the lives of indigenous peoples, fur traders, and settlers. This outdoor classroom brings learning to life for science, social studies, math, history, and more. In a survey conducted by the University of Minnesota, 100% of teachers believe Canoemobile is one of the best ways for students to learn science. From California to Minnesota to New York, 31,863 individuals participated in Canoemobile in 2018.

As we work with local, regional, and national partners coast to coast, we envision a day when every young person in America has the opportunity to access, learn in, and explore our public lands and wild places.



 = Canoemobile City

Gateway to Adventure

Gateway to Adventure experiences provide opportunities for individuals with cognitive and developmental disabilities to participate in outdoor activities that build confidence, teach hands-on skills, and promote community integration. Here, Bob prepares for a “wet exit” with support from Wilderness Inquiry outdoor leaders while adventuring at WI’s Little Sand Bay Base Camp. In 2018, 335 people participated in inclusive outdoor experiences with Gateway to Adventure.





Share the Adventure

Share the Adventure connects people to each other and the natural world, emphasizing Wilderness Inquiry's core value of social integration. Bringing people together in the outdoors is possible thanks to financial support which provides scholarships for individuals with financial need, adaptive equipment, and support services for people with disabilities. In 2018, 4,491 people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities shared the adventure with us, joining inclusive trips from the Apostle Islands to Utah's Sleeping Rainbow and beyond.

In 2000, WI developed the "Rick-shaw" (pictured here), an adaptive device making rugged trails and paths much more accessible for individuals using wheelchairs.





Outdoor Career Academy

Outdoor Career Academy (OCA) offers skill-building, credentialing, and professional training opportunities that prepare underserved youth for careers in the outdoor and environmental industries. Young people emerge with the skills and experiences that level the playing field and ready them to enter the workforce of the future. In 2018, 166 youth graduated from our OCA employment training program. In addition, more than 1,000 youth completed an outdoor career training module as part of their Canoemobile experience.





Families Together

Families Together makes outdoor adventures accessible for families who have a child or parent with a disability. By providing adaptive equipment and accessible facilities, Wilderness Inquiry creates supportive opportunities in the outdoors for families who face barriers traveling together. Scholarship support and youth discounts are available to those with financial need to ensure that family adventures are inclusive and accessible for all. In 2018, 3,367 individuals participated in programs that bring families together.

Financial Summary



Hunt Greene,
Board Treasurer

2018 was another year of substantial growth. Wilderness Inquiry served more people than ever before in communities across the country, as 40,222 people experienced the mission through shared outdoor adventures. The organization is committed to fiscal responsibility and good stewardship of resources, while ensuring programs are accessible for all. The average cost of programs remains just over \$100 per person. Wilderness Inquiry was also awarded the highest rating from Charities Review Council for an unprecedented eighth year, verifying that the organization exceeds industry standards. Audited financial statements are summarized below and were prepared by Carpenter, Evert & Associates, Certified Public Accountants.

Balance Sheet

	2018	2017
ASSETS		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 920,800	\$ 1,177,874
Short Term Investments	\$ 759,476	\$ -
Other Current Assets	\$ 353,209	\$ 677,194
Property & Equipment	\$ 1,744,008	\$ 1,757,764
Endowments & Investments	\$ 1,717,116	\$ 1,762,295
TOTAL ASSETS	\$5,494,609	\$ 5,375,127
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accrued Expenses	\$ 156,499	\$ 196,752
Deferred Revenue	\$ 296,754	\$ 287,634
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$ 453,253	\$ 484,386
LONG TERM LIABILITIES	\$ 311,194	\$ 267,638
NET ASSETS	\$ 4,730,162	\$ 4,623,103
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$5,494,609	\$5,375,127

Statement of Activities

	2018	2017
SUPPORT & REVENUE		
Grants, Contributions, Gifts	\$ 1,563,858	\$ 1,618,857
Government Grants	\$ 759,025	\$ 765,048
Program Fees	\$ 1,733,286	\$ 1,464,651
Investment Income	\$ 56,224	\$ 52,943
Miscellaneous Income	\$ 250,803	\$ 110,145
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	\$ 4,363,196	\$ 4,011,644
EXPENSES		
Program Services	\$ 3,492,208	\$ 2,989,660
Share the Adventure	\$ 1,627,428	\$ 1,367,649
Youth Engagement	\$ 1,396,403	\$ 1,275,083
Indiv. & Family with Disabilities	\$ 468,377	\$ 346,928
Management & General	\$ 424,139	\$ 450,076
Fundraising	\$ 251,055	\$ 185,432
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 4,167,402	\$ 3,625,168

"In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Wilderness Inquiry, Inc. as of December 31, 2018 and 2017, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

—Carpenter, Evert & Associates, Certified Public Accountants, March 2019

Program Growth, 2012-2018



Awards of Excellence



Donor Summary

Donors support Wilderness Inquiry's mission of inclusion, providing opportunities for tens of thousands of individuals of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to experience the natural world through shared outdoor adventures. The names, stories and photos below highlight the impact of donor contributions. Many thanks to the 1,246 individuals, corporations, and foundations that made donations to Wilderness Inquiry in 2018.

We make every effort to ensure accurate listings. If we did not attribute your contribution correctly, please contact Development Manager Willy Tully at (612) 676-9430 or willy@wildernessinquiry.org.

\$100,000+

Anonymous (1)
Margaret A. Cargill Foundation
Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation
Catherine Finch and Finch Family

\$25,000 - \$99,999

Fred C. and Katherine B. Andersen Foundation
Patrick and Aimee Butler Family Foundation
Eugene U. and Mary F. Frey Family Fund of The Saint Paul and Minnesota Community Foundations
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Lisa Stuart Schmoker Family Foundation
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Justin White - North Star Foundation

\$10,000 - \$24,999

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Minnesota Environmental Fund
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\$5,000 - \$9,999

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The Driscoll Foundation
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Jack Haggerty - Haggerty Family Foundation
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The Saint Paul and Minnesota Community Foundations
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\$1,000 - \$4,999

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Art and Martha Kaemmer
Fund of HRK Foundation
Kahn Brothers LLC



SUPERIOR HIKING TRAIL, PHOTO BY JULIA SCHWEITZER

With support from the Minnesota arts and cultural heritage fund, more than 5,511 youth participated in place-based learning opportunities focused on Minnesota's cultural and outdoor heritage in 2018. Canoemobile visited communities across the state, including Alexandria, Brainerd, Grand Rapids, Rochester, and more.



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 Harris



Wilderness Inquiry celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act on the St. Croix, alongside Congresswoman Betty McCollum, Harding Senior High School students, and other partners. Thanks to all of the public servants and elected officials who support our work to make the outdoors an inclusive place for everyone to enjoy, participate, and thrive.



Thank you to our federal partners that make Wilderness Inquiry programs possible as we work to make our nation's public lands and waterways accessible for all. These federal agencies and leaders teach job skills to underserved youth at Glacier National Park, provide history lessons on the Potomac, develop accessible pathways in the Apostle Islands, and much more.



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TWIN CITIES METRO, PHOTO BY TAI HENRICH

Students across Minnesota experience science firsthand as they test water turbidity, identify macroinvertebrates, and compare pH and water quality indicators. Between 2017 and 2020, more than 20,000 students will participate in citizen science on local waterways. Thanks to the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund for their support.



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 Karen and Steven Sonnenberg
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 space150
 Barb and Art Stock



40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, PHOTO BY JULIA SCHWEITZER

On May 3, more than 300 participants, supporters, and friends joined together to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Wilderness Inquiry. Honoring four decades of inclusive outdoors adventures, we unveiled our newest model of Voyageur canoe, highlighted the families that founded our endowments, shared stories from across the years, and looked ahead to a bright future. The 40th anniversary celebration raised \$242,901. Thank you to the tens of thousands of people that have shaped our story across 40 years.



GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, PHOTO BY PETER MACMILLAN

"In the past year, Patti and I have begun to think about our legacy and commitment to the future — how we can pay it forward and continue to make a difference. One thing we decided to do was to update our will. We never know what the future will bring, but we do know if we don't plan for it things won't turn out the way we want. So we decided to dedicate a portion of our estate to Wilderness Inquiry.

Our hope is that this lasting investment will ensure that the hundreds of thousands of people who will need Wilderness Inquiry in their lives in the next 40 years will greatly benefit from and appreciate it. The process is simple, but the impact is big."

—Greg Lais, Wilderness Inquiry Founder & Executive Director

To learn more about planned giving opportunities with Wilderness Inquiry, contact Julie Edmiston at (612) 676-9424 or julie@wildernessinquiry.org.

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Susan Talbot
Hal and Lynn Tearse
Mary Anne Thurber
Tom Umhoefer
Dag and Mary Von Ruden
Louis and Linda Wagner
Janice Whitney and Douglas Kelley
Linda and John Williams
Doug Woods
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\$100 to \$249

Anonymous (22)
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A Partner Paddle on the Chicago River, introducing paddlers to the wilderness close to home. In 2018, Wilderness Inquiry launched a Southern Lake Michigan hub to expand CanoeMobile programming and deepen partnerships with Indiana Dunes National Park, Chicago, and surrounding areas.

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MINNESOTA STATE CAPITOL, PHOTO BY GREG LAIS

Students and legislators gathered in the Minnesota State Capitol Rotunda in May to celebrate 40 years of inclusion in the outdoors. Here, Senator Carrie Ruud shares her Wilderness Inquiry story with a group of fourth grade students from New City School in Minneapolis.

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GREAT RIVER RACE, PHOTO BY BRIAN PETERSON

Every fall, 300 paddlers join for the greatest race on the Mississippi. The Great River Race is our biggest annual event, raising funds to support the Canoemobile "floating classroom" and our efforts to close the achievement gap. Special thanks to our Presenting Sponsor, The McKnight Foundation. Here, paddlers warm up their paddles before the starting horn sounds.



Great River Race

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Our endowments help us fulfill our mission in perpetuity. We are especially grateful to the families of the following individuals for their support.

Carol Beim Nulsen
 Neil DuBois
 Harold B. and Martha A. Finch
 Sean Maher
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Voyageur Sponsorships

Special thanks to our many friends who sponsored a canoe during our 40th year. To name a Voyageur canoe, contact Julie Edmiston at (612) 676-9424 or julie@wildernessinquiry.org.

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ITASCA STATE PARK, PHOTO BY RAYMOND KORTE

Minnesota Environmental Fund has supported Wilderness Inquiry since 1993, helping to create the next generation of stewards for Minnesota's environment.



THE FLEET OF THE FUTURE

In 2018, we engineered a revolutionary new hull design for our Voyager canoes resulting in faster, lighter, and more stable boats. By partnering with Wenonah Canoe, we are able to increase production from 2 to 50 boats per year. Our goal is to build 100 rigs, serving 1,000,000 kids annually.



JOSH TOLKAN
SANDING THE
PROTOTYPE



SPRAYING THE
GEL COAT ON THE
MASTER PLUG

In the early '90s, Greg Lais and David Olesen met with master boat builder Al Gustaveson to design a new Voyager canoe suitable for paddling on Lake Superior. Little did they know that these boats would launch a movement called Canoemobile. Thirty years later, we decided to re-design these beautiful boats to increase stability, speed, and carrying capacity.

Wilderness Inquiry boat builder Josh Tolken (pictured on the left), in consultation with Al and Mike Cichanowski, founder of Wenonah Canoe, crafted a new design and built a cedar strip prototype. After testing the prototype, Wenonah Canoe helped us make a master mold. Now, many labor hours and tests later, our new boats are ready to paddle!



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