

Pennesi -- Authorship Leadership Challenge Final

Arrowhead Regional Arts Council (ARAC) Individual Artist Project Grant Application

[View the ARAC Grant Guidelines](#)

[View the ARAC Work Sample Instructions](#)

My Application Attachments:

- [Budget Worksheet](#)
- [Photography Resume](#)
- [Work Sample \(writing\): Published Article in the Green Teacher Magazine, Winter 2015 issue](#)
- [Work Sample \(video\): Photography Tutorial with “Document Spring”](#)
- [Work Sample \(10 Image Portfolio\)](#)
- [Work Sample Description \(10 Image Portfolio Description\)](#)
- [Letter of Confirmation](#)

Artistic Quality

Reviewers will use your answers in this section to assess the quality of the work you have completed to date and the quality of the work you propose to do. Use the first question to tell us about your previous work. The second is to help us understand the significance of what you propose to do.

Please tell us about your past work.*

Include how you place your work within your discipline or medium. *(Max 1500 characters)*

My work as an artist uses photography as an educational tool in the promotion of wildlife research, environmental monitoring, resource management, and conservation practices. I believe technology can give us a profound window into the lives of untamed creatures; for me, it has fostered a greater appreciation and respect for the wild. Photography has taught me to interact more intimately with the environment, focus on detail, and read the stories written on the earth. I am most interested in using my images and the accompanying tales as a mechanism to bolster conservation. I strive to spark curiosity in others and help connect folks to the natural world. So far, I have had the privilege to share in-person and virtual presentations of my artwork with the North House Folk School, Minnesota Naturalist's Association, Minnesota Association of Environmental Educators, Sugarloaf Nature Center, Tettegouche State Park, Gooseberry State Park, Izaak Walton League, local Minnesota 4H chapters, and the Oldenburg Arts and Cultural Community Center. I have had my work shown in several in-person galleries, including the Great Lakes Gear Exchange in Duluth, MN, the Magnolia Cafe in Carlton, MN, and the Coho Cafe in Tofte, MN. I have been published in professional publications, including the Northern Wilds Magazine, Minnesota Conservation Volunteer Magazine, the Green Teacher Magazine, the Lake Superior Magazine, and the Wildlife Professional Magazine.

Please tell us about the project you want to do.*

What can you tell us about the artistic vision for this project?

Does it continue the type of work you've completed in the past or are you heading in a different direction? (Max 1500 characters)

I propose to use the funds from this individual artist grant to continue my work as a conservation photojournalist by educating Minnesotans about the excellent ecological world around us and our place in it. My proposed project seeks to depict the wildlife habitat needs of my community through images. Specifically, this project will culminate in an art showing at Tettegouche State Park Visitor's Center. Once annually the park awards 12 artists from Minnesota an amazing privilege to host an art gallery in the park's visitor lobby (one new artist each month); a panel of judges recently awarded me a spot in the line-up. A majority of the grant funds I am seeking will go to procuring framed images for the in-person gallery. I plan to show between 15 and 20 photographs. The images on display will be roughly half-wild animal portraits and half depictions of the associated habitats and environments. I will have interpretive signage to accompany each framed image. The text will include a title, subject line (species and photo details), personal story (how I achieved the image), and conservation section (what is the status or significance of this species/ecosystem in regards to conservation). I see this project as a way to form dialogues between people, especially around controversial species and natural resource topics. I hope that my images can help dispel fears or myths and serve as a way for people to find appreciation for the natural world through art. My art seeks to educate and reveal to the community the simultaneous resilience and vulnerability of its ecosystems.

Ability

ARAC looks at both your workplan/timetable and your budget as our panels assess your ability to carry out your project. Even if ARAC funding is only a small part of the complete project, it is important that we see a realistic budget that takes into account the time that you estimate it will take to complete the project. We also look at timetables, past work successes, and confirmation of partnerships (if applicable).

What is your workplan/timetable for completing this project?*(Max 1000 Characters)

I will use the first two weeks after the grant start date to further develop and refine my body of work for the art gallery, "A Window to the Wild". I will be editing, ranking, and putting together a spread of photographs that work together and build off one another. The time leading up to the art show will be used to create interpretive signage to accompany each framed piece. The signage will use a combination of facts from peer-reviewed literature as well as personal and professional stories to connect with viewers. During this process, I will be communicating with the Naturalist at Tettegouche State Park. In the 2-3 weeks leading up to the opening night, I will coordinate with the park regarding available space, my image selection, event details, and possible alternatives (with respect to Covid and safety measures). I feel confident that I could pull together art pieces and signage in a short period of time if necessary. I will write to the park and request at least 2-3 weeks' advance notice.

Date Range	Action towards Grant Project
06/30/2021 -- 07/15/2021	Design interpretive signage
07/15/2021 -- 07/30/2021	Order framed prints
07/30/2021 -- 08/30/2021	Coordinate logistics with the park
08/31/2021	Install prints and signage in park lobby
09/01/2021	Opening night!
10/01/2021	Remove gallery and compile feedback
10/01/2021 -- 11/01/2022	Final grant reporting

How would you use this grant to complete the project?*

Be specific about how you would use the funds. (Max 1000 Characters)

Grant funding will go towards the procurement of framed prints (\$3,000) and interpretive signage materials (\$100) for display at the Tettegouche Visitor's Center lobby. The prohibitive cost of printing and framing images prevents me from bringing my art to life as physical prints, especially since I do not own printing equipment. I plan to allocate a majority of the grant funding to procure prints and simultaneously support a local artist, Ryan Tischer (or another local artist or small business, out of Duluth, MN). Time to compile interpretive signage text and laminate the signs themselves is designated in my grant request at \$300 (estimate of \$20/hr wage rate for 15 hrs). My time to prepare and edit the images will be an in-kind donation of \$300 (estimate of \$20/hr wage rate for 15 hrs).

Tell us about why we should have confidence that you can execute this project.* (Max 1000 Characters)

In September of 2019, I had the great privilege of carrying out an Artist Access Grant through the ARAC. Through that grant I was able to partner with a local business, the Magnolia Cafe in Carlton, MN to have framed images on display for 2 months. My networking and relationship building skills helped me find and make use of this opportunity. I worked with the owner to plan the showing; the goal was to connect local community members to wildlife photographs, using a combination of landscape and remote camera images. The Cafe owner and I worked together to create an inviting atmosphere. The opening night event had live music, hors d'oeuvres, and a great turnout -- I couldn't have imagined a better result! I was able to engage in conversations with visitors about the art, share stories with new people, and create new connections.

In addition, I have experience working with magazine editors, hosting photography workshops, and teaching at educational events; all demand close attention to budgets and deadlines. While working on a photojournalism assignment for the Midwest Peregrine Society I had to navigate deadlines and work both with editors of the Minnesota Conservation Volunteer and with the MPS project leader and field

technicians to accurately represent the research, monitoring, and outreach efforts. Furthermore, as the lead photographer of “Document Spring” in 2019 (a citizen science phenology photo project in collaboration with the Oldenburg Cultural Community Center as well as Jay Cook State Park) I successfully navigated the technical instruction of learners of all ages and skill levels during a series of in-the-field workshops.

Impact

This section allows our panel to know the impact of this project on your career and your community.

What is the impact of this project on your artistic career?* (Max 1500 characters)

By fully using the opportunity to have my art in front of a larger audience, I will continue to build a following and educate Minnesotans about their wild neighbors and landscapes. The new images and framed pieces acquired through this grant will add to my physical collection for future showings. Tettegouche boasts nearly half a million visitors annually, a majority of them Minnesotans (MNDNR, 2021a). It is exciting to imagine all of the people that could be reached through this project as well as the increased exposure I may observe as a result. I plan to continue the pursuit of new exhibitions and to seek more presentation opportunities -- gaining a broader reach and audience over time. That reach will also be enhanced through my online following (social media and professional website) which is often how I am directly supported through print sales. Furthermore, I occasionally receive requests for interviews, photography assignments, and publications through my online presence -- which may be bolstered through successful implementation of this grant.

What is the benefit to your community of your project?* (Max 1500 characters)

Northern Minnesota’s Arrowhead Region contains a multitude of sites assigned a biodiversity ranking of “moderate, high, and outstanding” by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MNDNR, 2021b). Many of the species living in these sites are also in need of conservation action. According to Handler et al. (2014), Northern MN forests face direct and indirect pressures from climate change. Moreover, the wildlife of MN are sometimes rare, have secretive lifestyles, or simply fly under people’s radar. There is also a history of controversy surrounding the management of natural resources in MN. One doesn’t need to do too much digging to find mistrust around polarizing issues, including decisions related to deer (Serna, 2018), wolf (Ruid et al., 2009), and fisheries (Scheck, 2015; Wilcoxon, 2015) management in the state, among others. I intend to spread the idea that citizens and scientists alike can work to enhance the diversity and resiliency of landscapes across Minnesota and beyond. I believe images can induce powerful feelings, transfer knowledge, and facilitate informed decisions.

Evaluation

This section is for you to tell us about your goals and how you plan to know whether you succeeded in reaching your goal. The first section is really about your conception of the work. If you don't know how to answer this question, please contact us and talk the issue through with our Grants

Manager. But don't wait until the final two weeks before the deadline, as they may be too busy to provide much help. Know that goal statements such as "I want to finish a set of paintings," are acceptable, but might receive a very low score. Outcomes such as, "I finished the performance," are also potentially low scoring.

Goal Statement*

What are you trying to accomplish with this work?

What are your measurable outcomes? (Max 1000 Characters)

I am seeking to raise awareness for Minnesota wildlife's ecological needs and the needs of Minnesota's future forests. My goal is to inspire members of my community to get involved with conservation, which could take many forms, such as picking up trash, planting trees, creating or improving habitats, becoming citizen scientists, volunteering time or donating money to conservation initiatives, etc. Land stewardship is a central theme in the images and interpretive signage I intend to create and show through this grant. In his Master's thesis, conservation photographer Carlton Ward (2008) contends that documentary photography forms a window to social issues, promotes awareness, and can influence positive changes; my goal is just that. Furthermore, this form of photojournalism can help bridge the knowledge gap between scientific communities and the public (Ward, 2008). My measurable outcomes are: Do people appreciate the art on display? Are visitors engaging in dialogue? Is the audience demonstrating a willingness to learn, grow, and participate?

How do you plan to know if the work was a success?*

Please tell us about how you will assess this work.

How will you measure the outcomes stated above? (Max 1000 Characters)

I will measure success through in-person and digital conversations with visitors that have interacted with the artwork on display. Do I hear that people appreciate and enjoy the art -- yes or no and to what extent? How are people engaging with the art? Are they talking to family, friends, staff, or with the artist about what they are seeing? Are visitors reading the interpretive signs? Is the audience demonstrating a willingness to learn, grow, and participate? If successful, I will see an increase in awareness by the general public, as seen in part, through an increase in traffic to my educational website pages and social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram). Additionally, I hope to receive feedback from visitors and the host staff during and after the exhibition--in their eyes, how would they answer these questions: 1) What was most effective about the showing? 2) What would you like to see more/less of? 3) What could be most improved? 4) How did you connect with the images? 5) What did you learn from the images? 6) Other (general comments). I will include a station with "Comment Cards" where visitors can voluntarily provide written feedback in response to these questions. There will be a short sign that reads "In order to help me grow as an artist, I would love your feedback! Please consider filling out one of these comment cards and placing it in the feedback box".

COVID-19 Plan*

If necessary, what changes to your project are you planning to make if pandemic-related safety measures must be maintained? (Max 3000 Characters)

I plan to be flexible with what the in-person gallery event may look like with respect to continued pandemic-related safety measures. I will collaborate closely with the Park regarding the Minnesota State Park Covid-19 protocols and abide by those. I intend to work with Tettegouche State Park in developing alternatives to showing the artwork inside their lobby if they decide to close the building to the public. An outdoor gallery event is one example of such an alternative. Additionally, I could envision a virtual gallery--hosted through the Park's website or a virtual presentation of the art--through "zoom" or another digital hosting/communication platform. If the partnership with the Park falls through due to unforeseen circumstances, I will select a new venue such as a local nature center or community hub to partner with for a similar art showing. I have had professional working relationships with the North House Folk School in Grand Marais, as well as the Sugarloaf Nature Center on the North Shore and the Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center in Finland, MN. I strongly feel that this project could still manifest itself in some form, even if an in-person event does not seem possible due to Covid-19.

Optional

Is there anything more you would like to tell ARAC about yourself or your proposal?

Literature Cited

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