



# Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board


## Ash River Collection and Treatment System



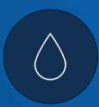
Presented By:  
Paul McDonald (Commissioner)  
Jason Chopp, PE (SEH®)  
October 8, 2025



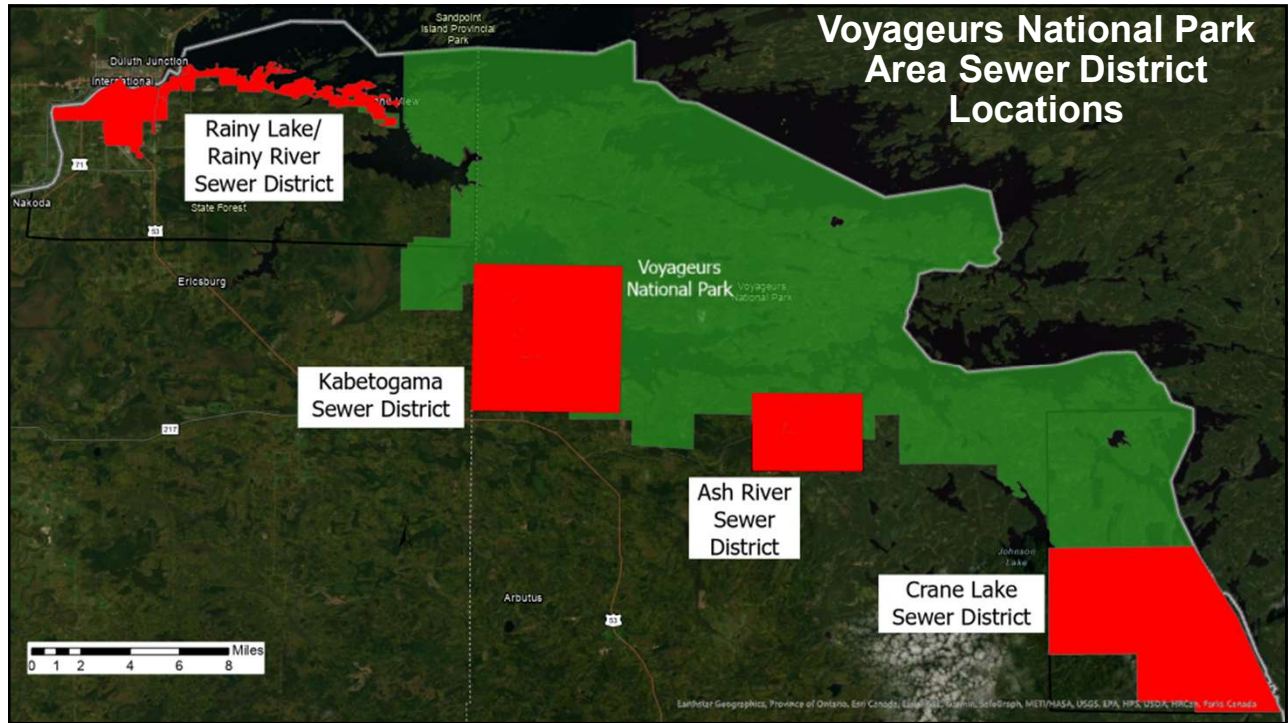
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# Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board



-  Formed in 2009 by Koochiching and St. Louis Counties to address water pollution from failing septic systems
-  Collaborates with local, state, and federal partners (MPCA, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, DNR, etc.)
-  Comprised of four (4) sewer districts:
  - Crane Lake
  - Koochiching County
  - Kabetogama
  - Ash River

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### Overview

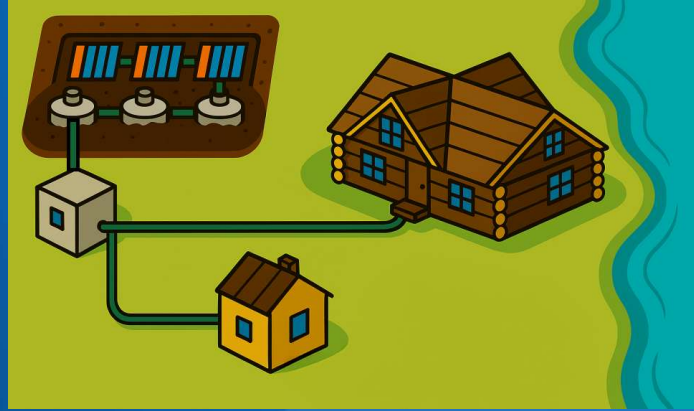
-  Approximately \$30,000,000 in clean water projects have been completed to-date for three (3) of the sewer districts adjacent to the VNP boundary
-  Ash River Sanitary District was formed in 2022 in an unorganized township, with a year-round population of 17
-  The region is largely based on tourism (resorts and houseboat entities)



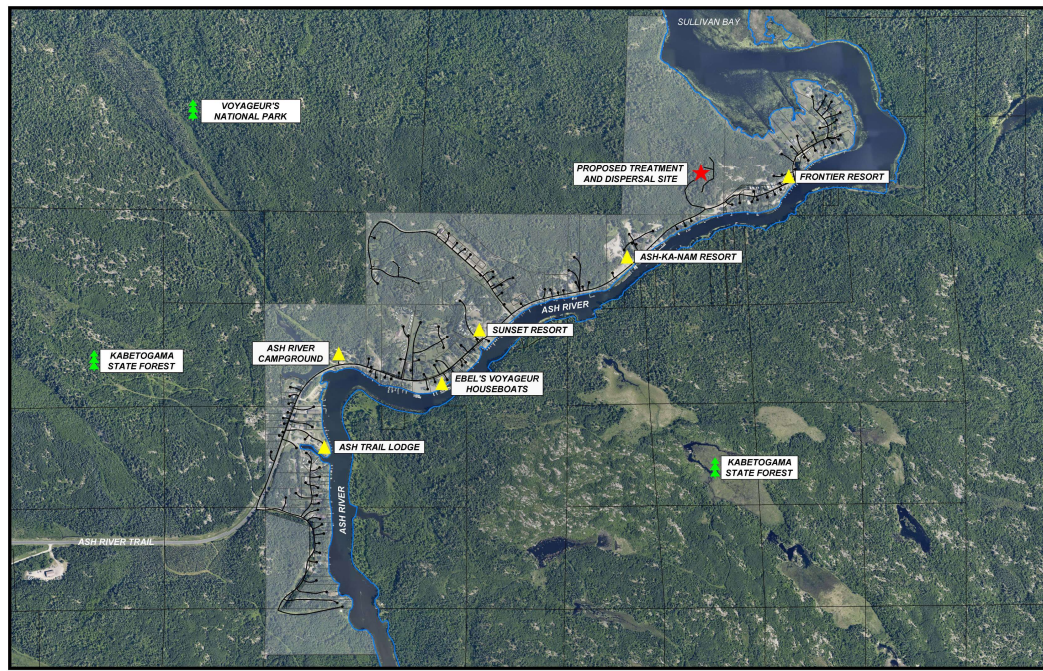
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# Ash River Project

- 151 properties (including undeveloped lots)
- Mix of residential and commercial (resort) properties
- Forcemain extends roughly 3.5 miles between all areas combined
- One wastewater treatment site included



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## Project Needs




Approximately 78% of existing septic systems are considered non-conforming or non-compliant with current standards



Many lots along the river are small, with little room to construct new and compliant individual systems on existing lots



Ash River's Facility Plan was approved by the MPCA in 2022 with a recommended plan including a low-pressure sewer system with a subsurface treatment facility




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## Funding Strategy


*\*The funding strategy and listed amounts are subject to change, as final awards may differ from the requested amounts, which themselves may be revised if project costs increase over time.*






Source	Request	Funding Type	Status
Congressional Directed Spending	\$4 M	Grant	Applied March 2025
MN Bonding Bill	\$8 M	Grant	Applied June 2025
Point Source Implementation	\$4.5 M	Grant	Applied July 2025
Water Infrastructure Fund	\$10 M	Grant	Pending
Clean Water Council	\$2 M	Grant	Pending
IRRRB	\$2 M	Grant	Pending
Public Facilities Authority	\$TBD	Loan	Pending
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$30.5 M</b>		



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## Funding & Feasibility Overview



-  PFA loan application is pending, but the project is listed on the PPL and has applied for PSIG grant funding. Current PPL ranking: #157
-  No utility rates exist yet—each property uses private systems, many of which are failing. The project aims to replace these with a centralized system.
-  Median household income is hard to assess due to the area's unincorporated status and distance from nearby towns (30–45 minutes).
-  **Without Bonding Bill funds, the project cannot proceed.** Without the funding sources outlined previously, costs would be unaffordable—up to \$790/month per EDU.
-  With Bonding Bill support and other funding, rates could drop to a more manageable ~\$100/month per EDU.

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## Thank you!



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