



Goldbelt Heritage

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Skipper for 2026 Canoe Journey: Haines to Juneau

RFP Issue Date: January 16, 2026

Proposal Due Date: February 15, 2026

Contract Period: [Start Date] through June, 15, 2026 (approx. 5 months)

Anticipated Start Date: Upon contract execution

Point of Contact: Miranda Bell, Culture & Arts Program Manager miranda.bell@goldbelt.com (907)-790-1470

1. OVERVIEW

Goldbelt Heritage Foundation (GHF) is seeking proposals from qualified individuals to serve as a **Skipper** for a traditional canoe journey from Haines to Juneau, taking place late May/early June 2026, coordinated official Canoe Journeys before Sealaska Heritage Foundation's Celebration 2026.

The Skipper will be the **lead person in the canoe**, guiding pullers during the canoe journey and coordinating closely with the Boat Captain for navigation and safety decision-making. The Skipper will support puller readiness, teamwork, and culturally grounded leadership, including participation in safety trainings and planning meetings.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

GHF is organizing a traditional canoe journey that will take place over approximately two weeks (including preparation and travel), culminating in Juneau as part of Celebration 2026. The journey will include a team of shareholder youth pullers and adult support participants.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The Skipper will serve as the lead canoe leader, responsible for guiding pullers and ensuring safe and coordinated on-water canoe operations throughout the journey.

A. Canoe Leadership & On-Water Operations

- Serve as the lead person in the canoe and primary canoe leader while underway
- Coordinate with the Boat Captain to support safe navigation and journey operations
- lead daily voyage execution including:
 - puller assignments and rotation schedules
 - safe launch and landing procedures
 - daily safety checks and briefings
- Maintain a calm, respectful environment that supports teamwork, learning, and cultural values

B. Crew Training & Readiness

- Help plan and lead training sessions for pullers prior to the journey
- Help provide instruction and leadership development for youth pullers (and adult support crew as appropriate)
- Verify participant readiness and maintain accountability for attendance and safe participation

C. Safety Training Support

- Help and be present for safety trainings led by the Boat Captain
- Support participant understanding of emergency roles, teamwork protocols, and on-water expectations
- Provide feedback and expert input on training effectiveness and readiness needs



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D. Planning & Coordination Support

- Attend planning meetings organized by GHF and the canoe journey Project Coordinator
- Coordinate closely with the Skipper to align on-water leadership and communication expectations

E. Post-Journey Wrap-Up and Reporting

- Aid in post-journey clean up, inventorying, storage, and housing of canoe and equipment.
- Provide a post-journey report to GHF that includes:
 - Summary of journey outcomes and participation
 - Safety issues or incidents (if any)
 - Assessment of readiness and training effectiveness
 - Lessons learned and recommendations for future canoe journey programming
- Participate in a debrief meeting with GHF staff

4. DELIVERABLES

The selected contractor will help provide the following deliverables:

1. Training Plan & Training Schedule (within first 4-6 weeks)
2. Puller Readiness Standards and Participation Expectations (within first 4-6 weeks)
3. Pre-Departure Readiness Summary (one week prior to departure)
4. Post-Journey Summary Report (by mid-June 2026)

5. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Proposals will be considered only from applicants who demonstrate:

- Proven experience as a skipper or canoe lead for traditional canoe journeys, or similar marine-based travel
- Demonstrated capability leading youth and/or group travel in challenging environments
- Strong safety mindset and leadership experience
- Experience navigating coastal waters in Southeast Alaska
- Knowledge of or respect for Indigenous cultural protocols and community practices
- Current certifications preferred, including (or ability to obtain):
 - First Aid/CPR
 - Wilderness First Aid or higher
 - Boater safety training
 - Any applicable maritime licensing or documented experience

Applicants must be able to demonstrate prior relevant experience and provide references.

6. CONTRACT TERMS

Contract Type: Independent Contractor (or firm)

Contract Period: As soon as possible upon contract execution through June 15, 2026

Estimated Level of Effort: Variable for first two months, based on planning needs and journey schedule. Expected to be full present for the duration of the canoe journey voyage until landing, and preparation (about a week out from launch).

Work Location: Hybrid/Remote, Juneau-based preferred + in-person training and journey travel

Travel Requirements: Must be available to travel for training sessions and for the canoe journey.



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Meeting Requirements: Must be available to attend planning meetings organized by GHF and the canoe journey Project Coordinator.

7. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Please submit proposals in PDF format and include:

A. Cover Letter

The proposal must include a cover letter that introduces the proposer, describes their interest in serving as Skipper, and confirms availability for the contract period.

B. Relevant Experience

The proposal must include a description of the proposer's relevant experience leading canoe journeys or comparable marine travel, including guiding pullers and navigating in challenging conditions.

C. Certifications and Credentials

The proposal must include copies of any relevant certifications and credentials supporting the proposer's ability to safely serve as Skipper.

D. References

Provide at least two references with contact information.

8. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Submit proposals to:

Miranda Bell

Culture & Arts Program Manager

Goldbelt Heritage Foundation

Email: miranda.bell@goldbelt.com

Subject Line: RFP – Boat Captain (Canoe Journey 2026)

Deadline: February 15, 2026

9. OPTIONAL ATTACHMENTS (Recommended)

- a. Draft Journey Overview & Intended Timeline
- b. Draft Route Map & Landing Points
- c. Safety Equipment Baseline List (if you have one)

10. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Relevant experience and qualifications
- Demonstrated understanding of the role
- Approach and professional capacity
- Availability and capacity

GHF may request an interview with finalists.

11. ADDITIONAL TERMS

GHF reserves the right to:



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- Reject any or all proposals
- Request clarification or additional information
- Modify the scope of work prior to contract award
- Award without interview if deemed appropriate



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