

FINAL REPORT

SEP 24 2001

MINNESOTA RELEAF MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM — CONTINUATION

14(a) \$850,000 TF/FRF

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This appropriation is for the fourth biennium of this tree planting and preservation project. An initial amount of the appropriation is for tree replacement in the cities of St. Peter and Comfrey. Part of the funding is for 70-100 matching grants to local communities to protect native oak forests from oak wilt and to provide technical assistance and cost sharing with communities for tree planting and community forestry assessments. A statewide publicity and application process will be developed and implemented for this matching grant portion. The project will also develop at least 9 publications on developing a project, caring for trees, trees native to Minnesota, and how to best achieve environmental benefits. Approximately 30 or more education presentations will be given as well.

Project due to be completed by June 30, 2001.

OVERALL PROJECT OUTCOME AND RESULTS

Through the Minnesota ReLeaf Local Grants Program, a total of 111 community forestry grant projects were funded, including 58 for tree planting, 38 for forest health and 15 for community tree inventory projects. On average, each \$1.00 of state funds was matched by \$1.72 of local cash and in-kind services.

This overmatch indicates increasing competition and demand for state support and reflects increased local investment and technical capacity to manage this resource. To improve program delivery, DNR technical staff need to have administrative work delegated to more appropriate staff.

The emphasis on native trees has increased the availability of native stock. However, demand for trees in residential development and for replanting after storms has resulted in tighter supplies and lower quality stock for those cities who wait too long. Also, earmarking \$200,000 of tree planting funds for two towns hit by tornados meant that about 40 others proposals could not be funded.

Among the forest health projects, greater emphasis on education helped significantly increase homeowner participation and their willingness to share in oak wilt control costs. Education and preventative practices need even greater emphasis, as well as making funds available to replant infection centers.

Funds available for tree inventories inadequate. Increasing awareness of the importance of forest resource assessments would help support more on-going management.

PROJECT RESULTS USE AND DISSEMINATION

Experience gained from ReLeaf projects is helping develop:

- a web-based Tree Planting 101 curriculum for training volunteers and Tree Care Advisors (<http://www.cnr.umn.edu/FR/extension/TreePlanting101/101intro.htm>),
- research findings for more effective oak wilt control,
- a Community Tree Inventory Decision Model to guide cities considering this vital step toward management, and
- revised state disaster response policies to better address community forestry needs.

All of these new tools are or will be available via the DNR web page (www.dnr.state.mn.us).

Date of Report: July 1, 2001

LCMR Final Work Program Report

Project Completion Date: June 30, 2001

I. PROJECT TITLE

MINNESOTA RELEAF TREE PLANTING & PRESERVATION GRANT PROGRAM

Number O1

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Total Biennial Project Budget:

\$LCMR: \$850,000

- \$ LCMR Amount Spent: \$815,707

= \$LCMR Balance: \$ 34,292

A. Legal Citation: ML1999, Chp. 231, Sec. 16, Subd. 14(a).

Appropriation Language: (a) Minnesota ReLeaf Matching Grant Program - Continuation. \$250,000 the first year and \$250,000 the second year are from the trust fund, and \$350,000 is from the future resources fund to the commissioner of natural resources for the fourth biennium, with at least \$210,000 for matching grants to local communities to protect native oak forests from oak wilt and to provide technical assistance and cost sharing with communities for tree planting and community forestry assessments. \$200,000 of this appropriation the first year is for tree replacement in the cities of St. Peter and Comfrey. The appropriation from the future resources fund is available immediately upon enactment.

B. Status of Match Requirement:

Match Required: \$ N/A (Note: the programmatic intent was to attain an overall match, including both cash and inkind contribution value, averaging 1.4 local dollars per state dollar. Actual match was 1.72).

II. and III. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY: Matching grants to local communities resulted in the planting of 11,016 predominantly native trees, protection of native oak forests from oak wilt by treating 1,307 oak wilt infection centers and completion of 15 community forest assessments and management plans. Some 56 educational workshops held statewide were attended by an estimated 850 local residents.

The local match of \$1,345,314.19 (cash and in-kind), indicates the increasing local investment in trees and the staff to maintain them. It also reflects the increased competition for these funds.

To improve program delivery, DNR technical staff need to have administrative work delegated to more appropriate staff.

The emphasis on native trees has increased the availability of native stock. However, demand for trees in residential development and for replanting after storms has resulted in tighter supplies and lower quality stock for those cities who wait too long. Also, earmarking \$200,000 of tree planting funds for two towns hit by tornados meant that about 40 others proposals could not be funded.

Among the forest health projects, greater emphasis on education helped significantly increase homeowner participation and their willingness to share in oak wilt control costs. Education and preventative practices need even greater emphasis, as well as making funds available to replant infection centers.

Funds available for tree inventories were inadequate. Increasing awareness of the importance of forest resource assessments would help support more on-going management.

PROJECT RESULTS USE AND DISSEMINATION

Experience gained from ReLeaf projects is helping develop:

- a web-based Tree Planting 101 curriculum for training volunteers and Tree Care Advisors (<http://www.cnr.umn.edu/FR/extension/TreePlanting101/101intro.htm>),
- research findings for more effective oak wilt control,
- a Community Tree Inventory Decision Model to guide cities considering this vital step toward management, and
- revised state disaster response policies to better address community forestry needs.

All of these new tools are or will be available via the DNR web page (www.dnr.state.mn.us).

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1. Planting Program

Step A. Publicity & Application Process. A statewide publicity and application process will be developed and implemented. Communities (local units of government and 501c3 non-profits) throughout the state will be eligible to apply for planting grants. Planting funds will be allocated to the DNR Regions as proposed in the guidelines in the LCMR-approved 1992 Minnesota ReLeaf Implementation Plan.

During summer-fall 1999, each Regional Steering Committee will refine regional priorities, receive applications, and select projects to fund which best meet program objectives. On-site Needs Determinations will be conducted before any project is funded.

| <u>Budget:</u> | <u>LCMR</u> | <u>Other Est. Funding</u> |
|------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| publicity & program administration | \$00 | DNR/coop \$15,000 |

Completion Date: December 1999

Step B. Educational Program. At least 9 publications (on developing an appropriate project, effectively planting and caring for trees, trees native to Minnesota, and how to best achieve environmental benefits) were distributed; this included reprinting publications as needed and developing 1 new publication. Some 56 educational programs were offered between January and April 2000 through many cooperating organizations, targeted to local participants as well as the general public. Total attendance for these events was approximately 850 local residents.

| <u>Budget:</u> | <u>LCMR Request</u> | <u>Other Est. Funding</u> | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| educational programs & materials | \$5,000 | DNR/coop | \$10,000 |
| printing educational materials | - \$5,000 | | |
| balance | 0 | | |

Completion Date: April 2000

Step C. Tree Planting Activities. Grant agreements were signed for 55 approved projects. The state funds leveraged \$859,325.63 of investments by local units of government, non-profit organizations, and their participating constituents. The program will build on the experience gained in previous LCMR-funded Mn ReLeaf initiatives. Applicants requested cash advances for certain activities not to exceed 75% of their grant. 11,016 predominately native trees were planted in communities throughout Minnesota to restore habitats, save energy, benefit wildlife, reduce erosion, and facilitate educational opportunities. Most of the projects will be completed during spring and fall 2000. Following project completion and submission of a Final Report by the local applicant, DNR staff conducted an on site Compliance check of each project. Then each Grantee received their final payment.

| <u>Budget:</u> | <u>LCMR Request</u> | <u>Other Est. Funding</u> | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| accelerated tech. assistance | \$8,000 | DNR/coop | \$5,000 |
| contracted technical assistance | - \$6,935 | | |
| balance | \$1,065 | | |
| program admin. & tech. asstnc | \$00 | DNR/coop | \$10,000 |
| matching grants to local communities | \$262,000 | min. local | \$262,000 |
| matching grants awarded | -\$246,792 | | |
| balance | \$ 15,208 | | |

Completion Date: May 2001

Result 2. Oak Forest Preservation

Step A. Publicity & Application Process. A publicity and application process was developed and implemented targeted at counties undergoing development where oak wilt is present. Special attention was given to increasing local awareness and organizational capacity to co-sponsor oak wilt programs in oak wilt infected areas which have had no previous programs, such as in southeastern Minnesota. Funding for matching grants were allocated based on the number of infection centers and going rates for treatment work to southeastern Minnesota (DNR

Regions 4-5), central Minnesota (Region 3) and the metropolitan area (Region 6). Communities (local units of government and 501c3 non-profits) where oak wilt is found within these DNR Regions were eligible to apply for oak wilt grants. Generally, priority was given to communities who have not been eligible for oak wilt funding under the past federal program. During summer 1999 through winter 2000, each Regional Steering Committee refined regional priorities, publicized the program, received applications, and selected projects to fund. Needs Determinations were conducted by on site inspection and/or use of aerial photos before any project was funded.

| <u>Budget:</u> | <u>LCMR Request</u> | <u>Other Est. Funding</u> | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| publicity & program administration | \$00 | DNR/coop | \$10,000 |
| <u>Completion Date:</u> | March 1999 | | |

Step B. Oak Wilt Control Activities. Grant agreements were signed with 37 local project sponsors. The state funds leveraged \$395,073.45 in investments by local units of government, non-profit organizations, and their participating constituents. Projects funded for oak wilt control used treatment methods of root disruption and spore tree removal whose effectiveness has been proven in the Cooperative Oak Wilt Suppression program. Applicants requested cash advances for certain activities not to exceed 75% of their grant. Community records on the number of infection centers treated was somewhat inconsistent. Based on previous experience and a random sampling of the most reliable reports, it was calculated that 1,307 oak wilt infection centers were treated, protecting thousands of acres of native oak forests. Most of the projects were completed during summer and fall 2000. Following project completion and submission of a Final Report by the local applicant, DNR staff conducted selected on site Compliance Checks for each local sponsor. Then, each Grantee received their final payment.

| <u>Budget:</u> | <u>LCMR Request</u> | <u>Other Est. Funding</u> | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| technical assistance & admin. | \$10,000 | DNR/coop | \$10,000 |
| contracted technical assistance | -\$10,000 | | |
| balance | 0 | | |
| matching grants to local communities | \$290,000 | min. local | \$290,000 |
| matching grants awarded | -\$288,136 | | |
| balance | \$ 1,864 | | |
| <u>Completion Date:</u> | March 2001 | | |

Result 3. Community Forest Assessments

Step A. Publicity and Application Process. A statewide publicity and application process was developed and implemented in coordination with planting and forest health activities. Communities (local units of government and 501c3 non-profits) throughout the state were eligible to apply for assessment grants. Funding was allocated to the DNR Regions following the guidelines in the LCMR-approved 1992 Minnesota ReLeaf Implementation Plan. During summer-fall 1999, each Regional Steering Committee developed regional priorities, based on primary and secondary

criteria established by the State Steering Committee, received applications and selected assessment projects to fund which best met program objectives. Needs determinations were conducted before any project was funded.

| <u>Budget:</u> | <u>LCMR request</u> | <u>Other Est. Funding</u> |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| publicity & program admin. | \$00 | DNR/coop \$10,000 |
| <u>Completion Date:</u> | December 1999 | |

Step B. Educational Program. A Community Forest Assessment fact sheets was developed to present basic information about tree inventories and assist communities in deciding which type best meets their needs: a periodic or planning inventory, a continual, spreadsheet-type, or a GIS(geographic information systems) compatible tree inventory. These factsheets were distributed in application packets and available on the DNR webpage. DNR field staff and cooperators provided additional assistance as applicants were developing their project proposals.

| <u>Budget:</u> | <u>LCMR Request</u> | <u>Other Est. Funding</u> |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| educational outreach & materials | \$2,000 | DNR/coop \$10,000 |
| printing educational materials | -\$2,000 | |
| balance | 0 | |
| <u>Completion date:</u> | April 2000 | |

Step C. Community Forest Assessment Activities. Grant agreements were signed for 15 approved projects. The state funds leveraged \$92,915.11 in investments by local units of government, non-profit organizations and their participating constituents. Applicants requested cash advances for certain activities not to exceed 75% of their grant. The matching monies were a catalyst for communities to assess their tree resources and complete management plans to integrate the protection and management of their natural resources with their public infrastructure, zoning and comprehensive planning processes. Following project completion and submission of a Final Report by the applicant, DNR staff conducted an on-site Compliance Check of each project. Then each Grantee received their final payment.

| <u>Budget:</u> | <u>LCMR Request</u> | <u>Other Est. Funding</u> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| technical assistance & admin. | \$00 | DNR/coop \$10,000 |
| matching local grants | \$73,000 | min. Local \$73,000 |
| matching grants awarded | -\$66,844 | |
| balance | \$ 6,156 | |

Result 4. Tornado ReLeaf. Grant agreements were signed with the cities of St. Peter and Comfrey to cost share tree planting to mitigate the tree cover lost in the tornados of March 30, 1998. DNR provided technical assistance to assess the planting needs and help develop projects with strong public education components.

The cities were required to match the grants, by at least 1:1, with cash or in-kind services. Actual local match was \$323,085. A total of 3,106 predominately native trees were planted during spring and fall 2000. Following project completion and submission of a Final Report by the cities, DNR conducted an on site compliance

check in both cities. Then each city received their final payment.

As a result of DNR staff needs assessment for the city of Comfrey, it was determined that \$10,000 of the \$50,000 they were allocated could be used elsewhere. In July, 2000, a tornado damaged a large portion of the City of Granite Falls, so these funds were redirected to help in that replanting effort. Assistance was provided by DNR staff and the Tree Trust, resulting in the planting of 459 trees in the fall of 2000 and spring of 2001.

| <u>Budget:</u> | <u>LCMR Request</u> | <u>Other Est. Funding</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| program admin & tech asst | \$00 | DNR/coop \$2,000 |
| matching grants | \$200,000 | min. local \$200,000 |
| matching grants awarded | <u>- \$190,000</u> | |
| balance | <u>\$ 10,000</u> | Date of Report: July 1, 2001 |

VI. CONTEXT

A. Significance: Research has demonstrated that communities benefit environmentally (through energy conservation, carbon sequestration, heat island reduction, reduced storm water runoff, erosion control, and wildlife habitat) in direct proportion to the number of healthy trees and tree canopy cover within the community. Yet, too many communities are not able to keep up with losses of trees (whether due to natural causes such as severe storms, through disease, or as a result of harsh, unnatural conditions). A most serious decline in trees in some communities are the thousands of acres of oak forests are being needlessly lost to development-related oak wilt. Furthermore, many communities are not planting trees to most effectively provide environmental benefits or are planting mostly exotic species. Matching grant programs offer proven incentives to encourage planting of the right trees in the right places, to preserve native oak forests, and to replant native species. **Planting Program.** In 1991-93, 1995-97 and in 1997-99 Minnesota ReLeaf leveraged contributions equaling two local dollars for every state dollar to plant trees strategically for energy conservation, involve volunteers, provide research-based educational programs, and in 1995-99 plant native trees. Presently, the state's ability to encourage local improvements is limited because no other sources of federal or state funds are available for tree planting. **Oak Forest Preservation.** When the oak wilt suppression program began in 1991, over 80% of the oak forests in the 7-county target area were seriously threatened by then existing oak wilt infections. By the end of the federal program in 1997, over 3,300 infection centers had been treated, thereby protecting 75% of the remaining oak forests. In addition, outside of the federal treatment area over 200 more infection centers have been identified in developing areas of 6 southeastern Minnesota counties. Moreover, storm damage to oaks in may and June, 1998 resulted in an undetermined number of new infection centers due to overland spread. However, with sufficient state support, the threat of oak wilt in much of Minnesota could be eliminated. **Community Forest Assessments.** Many communities (especially smaller and older cities) are hampered in their protection and management of natural resources by lack of information about their public trees and significant

natural areas. Moreover, most cities lack the tools to integrate community forest management with public works, zoning and comprehensive planning. This relatively small investment of state funds will improve local communities capacity to wisely protect and manage their resources. **Tornado ReLeaf.** The tornados of March 30, 1998 destroyed most of the mature tree canopy in Comfrey and St. Peter. Since FEMA no longer pays for tree replacement, these citizens needed help to begin to replace their community forests. Through the ReLeaf Program, the state shared up to 50% of tree replacement costs and provide the technical assistance to ensure their survival.

B. Time: All components were completed by June 30, 2001.

C. Budget Context:

| | July 1997 - June 1999 Prior expenditures on this project | July 1999 - June 2001 Proposed expenditures on this project | July 2001 - June 2003 Anticipated future expenditures on this project ^a |
|---|--|--|--|
| 1. LCMR | \$300,000 | \$850,000 | \$1,000,000 |
| 2. General Fund ^b | \$450,000 | 0 | 0 |
| 3. Other State ^c | \$100,000 | \$80,000 | \$130,000 |
| 4. Local match & inkind ^d | \$1,125,000 | \$1,218,000 | \$1,500,000 |
| TOTAL | \$1,975,000 | \$2,148,000 | \$2,630,000 |

^a No work in 1999-2001 was dependent on any future funding; instead the figures for 2001-2003 are for future LCMR funding request & supporting funds.

^b This includes 2 appropriations made in Chap. 216, Sec. 5, Subd. 4, lines 13.4-13.18 (\$250,000 for grants to local community forest ecosystem health programs) and lines 13.24-13.30 (\$200,000 for the Mn ReLeaf program ... matching grants to local communities to plant predominantly native trees). A coordinated program for these monies & the LCMR allocation has been implemented.

^c "Other state" is an estimate of inkind state agency staff time for program administration, technical assistance, and educational materials/programs etc. of all community forestry grant programs.

^d "Local match & inkind" are grouped together because for the current MnRL planting program, specific figures on which is inkind and which is cash will not be known until the projects are complete. This includes match for general fund \$\$.

BUDGET:

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Personnel | \$0 | |
| Equipment | \$0 | |
| Acquisition | \$0 | |
| Development | \$0 | |
| Other: | | |
| Grants | \$791,772.40 | pass through \$s to local communities |
| Prof. Services | \$ 16,935.23 | education materials & programs |
| Printing | \$ 7,000.00 | education materials |
| Total | \$815,707.63 | |

VII. COOPERATION:

The following staff contributions will be made at not cost to the project:

*within DNR the following staff are expected to be part of the project team:

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| Program Manager | Ken Holman | 15% |
| Oak Wilt Advisors | Susan Burks& Ed Hayes | 5%each |
| Region's U&CF Program Leaders | (J. Edmonds, M. Albers, J. Albers,D. Mueller, E. Hayes) | 5% each |
| Area/Region staff conducting needs determinations & compliance checks | | 30% total |

*five or six MnRL Regional Steering Committees
(with representatives of Mn Extension Service, utility companies, non-profit organizations or volunteer organizations, Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committees and other forestry professionals)

*cooperators conducting educational programs
(e.g. Mn Dept of Transportation, Mn Horticultural Society, Tree Trust) N/A

VIII. LOCATION

Planting Program: communities in all ECS subsections were eligible.

Oak Forest Preservation: targeted at ECS subsections: P, S, W, and X; with some projects in selected areas of subsections R and V. A map showing the exact location of each project funded can be found in the appendix of this report.

| Attachment A deliverable Products and Related Budget | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| | Result 1: 70-80 Tree Planting Projects | Result 2: Treat 400-500 Oak Wilt Centers | Result 3: Complete 10-15 Community Forest Assessments | Result 4: St. Peter & Comfrey Tree Planting |
| Budget Item | | | | |
| Printing & Advertising | \$5,000 | | \$2,000 | |
| Contracts | | | | |
| Professional/technical | \$8,000 | \$10,000 | | |
| Other contracts: forest | | \$290,000 | | |
| Other contracts: commnty. forest assessment grants | | | \$73,000 | |
| Buildings or other land improvement: tree planting grants | \$262,000 | | | \$200,000 |
| COLUMN TOTAL | \$275,000 | \$300,000 | \$75,000 | \$200,000 |