

FINAL REPORT**2003 Project Abstract**

For the Period Ending June 30, 2006

APR 28 2006

TITLE: Restoring Minnesota's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Corridors - Phase II, Wetlands Reserve Program (3d part 1), Project Areas #1 (Aspen Parklands), 3 (Border Prairie), 6 (Upper Minnesota River), 7 (Alexandria Moraine), 9 (Des Moines River Valley), and 10 (Southern Lakes)

This project has 2 parts. Part 1 (3d1) includes the expenditure of LCMR funds to contract with WRP technicians and is administered by Ducks Unlimited (DU). Part 2 (3d2) is the accomplishment component of this project, administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and includes reporting on matching dollars and total acres enrolled.

PROJECT MANAGER (3d1): Roger Pederson

ORGANIZATION: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

ADDRESS: 18564 Esquire Way, Farmington, MN 55024

WEB SITE ADDRESS: (If applicable) www.ducks.org

PROJECT MANAGER (3d2): Tim Koehler

ORGANIZATION: USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service

ADDRESS: 375 Jackson Street, Suite 600

FUND:

LEGAL CITATION: ML 2003, Ch. 128, Art. 1, Sec. 9, Subd. ____ () Restoring Minnesota's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Corridors- Phase II.

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$465,000

In close partnership and cooperation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Ducks Unlimited (DU) provided supervisory, biological and technical assistance to increase the delivery of the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) in the Habitat Partnership Corridors emphasis areas in Minnesota. WRP is a private land wetland restoration program where restorations are protected by perpetual easements. \$465,100 of Environmental Trust Funds (ETF) were used to employ and supervisor five wetland restoration technicians who were housed in NRCS offices in Crookston, Fergus Falls, Detroit Lakes, and Albert Lea. During the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund grant Phase II project period, over 7,223 habitat acres were restored on existing easements (74 sites) and 5,037 acres were protected via perpetual easements (42 sites) in 6 priority Habitat Corridor Partnership areas (Project Areas 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, & 10). In the Aspen Parklands (Project Area #1), 3,993 acres were restored (1,516 wetland acres) at 19 sites and perpetual WRP easements totaling 546 acres were closed on 4 sites. In the Border Prairie (Project Area #3), 772 acres were restored (336 wetland acres) at 16 sites and perpetual WRP easements totaling 2,780 acres were closed on 23 sites. In the Upper Minnesota River (Project Area #6), 332 acres were restored (53 wetland acres) at 2 sites and perpetual WRP easements totaling 484 acres were closed on 5 sites. In the Alexandria Moraine (Project Area #7), 116 acres were restored (20 wetland acres) at 4

sites and perpetual WRP easements totaling 579 acres were closed on 5 sites. In the Des Moines River Valley (Project Area #9), 111 acres were restored (20 wetland acres) at one site. In the Southern Lake (Project Area #10), 1,898 acres were restored (1,660 wetland acres) at 32 sites and perpetual WRP easements totaling 649 acres were closed on 5 sites. Federal matching funds (for easement costs) totaled \$7,699,331. Given federal staffing restrictions and NRCS workloads, contract tech support (via financial support from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund) was absolutely critical to increasing the amount of acres enrolled and restored in Minnesota's Wetlands Reserve Program. Increased WRP applications enabled Minnesota to rank near the top of the list nationally in securing federal funding for WRP.

FINAL REPORT

WORK PROGRAM FINAL REPORT

APR 28 2006

Date of Report: April 27, 2006

Date of Next Status Report: NA

Date of Work Program Approval: January 6, 2004 (amended 6/19/03, 10/30/04, 11/15/05, & 2/8/06)

Project Completion Date: March 30, 2006

LCMR Work Program 2003

I. Project Title: Restoring Minnesota's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Corridors - Phase II, Wetlands Reserve Program (3d part 1), Project Areas #1 (Aspen Parklands), 3 (Border Prairie), 6 (Upper Minnesota River), 7 (Alexandria Moraine), 9 (Des Moines River Valley), and 10 (Southern Lakes)

This project has 2 parts. Part 1 (3d1) includes the expenditure of LCMR funds to contract with WRP technicians and is administered by Ducks Unlimited (DU). Part 2 (3d2) is the accomplishment component of this project, administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and includes reporting on matching dollars and total acres enrolled.

Project Manager, 3d1: Roger Pederson
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Project Manager, 3d2: Tim Koehler
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Total Biennial Project Budget:	LCMR Appropriation:	\$ 465,100
	Minus Amount Spent:	\$ 465,100
	Equal Balance:	\$ -0-

Legal Citation: ML. 2003, Chapter x, Section x, Subd. x Restoring Minnesota's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Corridors- Phase II.

Appropriation Language: : \$4,850,000 (Env. Trust Fund) Restoring Minnesota's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Corridors Phase II - \$2,425,000 the first year and \$2,425,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for the second biennium for acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements with Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, Minnesota Land Trust, the Trust for Public Land, Minnesota Valley Trust, Inc., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Red Lake Band of Chippewa, Leech Lake Band of Chippewa, Fond du Lac Band of Chippewa, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Board of Water and Soil Resources to plan, restore, and acquire fragmented landscape corridors that connect areas of quality habitat to sustain fish, wildlife, and

LCMR Workplan 2003

Title: Restoring Minnesota's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Corridors- WRP (3d1)

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plants. As part of the required work program, criteria and priorities for planned acquisition and restoration activities must be submitted to the legislative commission on Minnesota resources for review and approval before expenditure. Expenditures are limited to the 11 project areas as defined in the work program. Land acquired with this appropriation must be sufficiently improved to meet at least minimum habitat and facility management standards as determined by the commissioner of natural resources. This appropriation may not be used for the purchase of residential structures unless expressly approved in the work program. Any land acquired in fee title by the commissioner of natural resources with money from this appropriation must be designated: (1) as an outdoor recreation unit under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.07; or (2) as provided in Minnesota Statutes, sections 89.018, subdivision 2, paragraph (a); 97A.101; 97A.125; 97C.001; and 97C.011. The commissioner may so designate any lands acquired in less than fee title. The appropriation is available until June 30, 2006, at which time the project must be completed and final products delivered, unless an earlier date is specified in the work program.

II. and III. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY:

Under this project, DU used Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund dollars to hire and supervise five contract technicians in four locations (Crookston, Fergus Falls, Detroit Lakes, and Albert Lea) to expand the federal Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) implementation in various Habitat Corridor Partnership project areas. Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund dollars was also used for necessary travel and miscellaneous supplies (survey supplies, etc.) for contract techs. WRP offers landowners the opportunity to take marginal lands out of agricultural production and restore them to their natural state. The landowner is paid the agricultural value for the property and up to 100% cost share for restoration activities. Once an easement is recorded, the landowner has one year to start the restoration and three years from recording to complete the restoration.

During the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund grant Phase II project period, over 7,223 habitat acres were restored on existing easements (74 sites) and 5,037 acres were protected via perpetual easements (42 sites) in 6 priority Habitat Corridor Partnership areas (Project Areas 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, & 10). In the Aspen Parklands (Project Area #1), 3,993 acres were restored (1,516 wetland acres) at 19 sites and perpetual WRP easements totaling 546 acres were closed on 4 sites. In the Border Prairie (Project Area #3), 772 acres were restored (336 wetland acres) at 16 sites and perpetual WRP easements totaling 2,780 acres were closed on 23 sites. In the Upper Minnesota River (Project Area #6), 332 acres were restored (53 wetland acres) at 2 sites and perpetual WRP easements totaling 484 acres were closed on 5 sites. In the Alexandria Moraine (Project Area #7), 116 acres were restored (20 wetland acres) at 4 sites and perpetual WRP easements totaling 579 acres were closed on 5 sites. In the Des Moines River Valley (Project Area #9), 111 acres were restored (20 wetland acres) at one site. In the Southern Lake (Project Area #10), 1,898 acres were restored (1,660 wetland acres) at 32 sites and perpetual WRP easements totaling 649 acres were closed on 5 sites. Federal matching funds (for easement costs) totaled \$7,699,331. Given federal staffing restrictions and NRCS workloads, contract tech support (via financial support from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund) was absolutely critical to increasing the amount of acres enrolled and restored in Minnesota's Wetlands Reserve Program. Increased WRP applications enabled Minnesota to rank near the top of the list nationally in securing federal funding for WRP.

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

Result 1: WRP Implementation.

Description: DU provided technical and administrative assistance to NRCS field offices and landowners. DU promoted the WRP program in conjunction with other LCMR partners in Habitat Corridors Partnership's (HCP) Project Areas #1, 3, 6, 7, 9, and 10 and enabled NRCS to acquire over 12,259 important habitat acres within the assigned HCP corridor areas. DU contract technicians implemented all aspects of the WRP program, and DU provided coordinating administrative support. Workplan budget expenses and acre accomplishments were entered and reported through the HCP reporting system data base.

Summary of Budget Information for Result 1:	LCMR Budget:	\$ 465,100
	Amount Spent:	\$ 465,100
	Balance:	\$ -0-

Budget:

Contract Personnel (includes up to 24 mos. sal and benefits): \$430,000 – LCMR funds

Contract Technicians (approx. 12,650 hours @ approx. \$34/hour) = \$ 430,000

Subtotal = **\$ 430,000**

DU provided contract technicians and administrative support for these positions. NRCS provided vehicles, office space and supplies, limited equipment, and training.

Personnel/Administrative = \$19,500 – LCMR funds

Supervision and administration = \$ 19,500

Subtotal = **\$ 19,500**

Travel (In-State) = \$11,560 – LCMR Funds

Meals = \$ 5,560

Hotel expense = \$ 6,000

Subtotal = **\$11,560**

Equipment = \$ -0- LCMR Funds

Computer system, ATV, or survey equipment = \$ -0-

Subtotal = **\$ -0-**

Note : Equipment purchased under Phase I is accounted for and held by NRCS and will continue to be used for this project throughout its useful life. No additional equipment purchases were necessary under Phase II.

Supplies and miscellaneous = \$4,040 – LCMR Funds

Cell phone/service (3 phones @ 24 mos. Service @ \$50/mo)	=	\$3,600
Printing, postage, misc.	=	\$ 440
Subtotal	=	\$4,040

Completion Date:

Five existing technicians (Crookston, Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls and Albert Lea) transferred from Phase I funding to Phase II funding on July 1, 2004. During Phase II, NRCS and DU provided ongoing WRP training for the contract technicians. The technicians worked on new and existing applications or projects within the habitat corridor areas they were assigned. WRP is currently authorized until at least 2008 by the federal Farm Bill; technicians will be needed until that time, but this phase of the project ended on March 30, 2006 when all funds were spent.

V. TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET:

All Results: Contract Personnel	=	\$ 430,000
All Results: Personnel/Admin	=	\$ 19,500
All Results: In-State Travel	=	\$ 11,560
All Results: Equipment	=	\$ -0-
<u>All Results: Supplies/Misc.</u>	=	<u>\$ 4,040</u>
TOTAL	=	\$ 465,100

TOTAL BUDGET: \$465,100; Total Spent = \$465,100 ; Balance = \$ -0-

See: ATTACHMENT A for complete budget details

VI. PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE SPENDING:

DU has a national interest in promoting the WRP program, especially in our Great Plains Region. Implementation of the federal Farm Bill is a key component of our efforts.

A. Past Spending: Since 2000, DU has partnered with NRCS in several ways to promote and implement WRP through a partnership agreement. DU has employed 3 staff to promote and implement WRP in southcentral, westcentral and northwest Minnesota. DU has assisted in the design and construction of several large projects, and has helped secure several easements by providing incentive payments to landowners. Since 2000, DU has implemented more than \$500,000 of program (exclusive of ETF funds) towards implementation of WRP in Minnesota.

B. Current and Future Spending: DU currently has 3.5 FTEs directly involved in delivering WRP in Minnesota. We also have another contract technician (funded with LCMR dollars through the Shallow Lake project) who assists with Farm Bill program delivery which may include WRP. Current annual costs to DU for this program is approximately \$200,000. LCMR funds will be used to match \$310,000 in federal NRCS funds via a Contribution Agreements where LCMR money is matched on a 1:1 basis. Contribution funds will be used to provide additional technical assistance for the duration of the LCMR WRP project.

C. Required Match: N/A

VII. PROJECT PARTNERS:

A. Partners Receiving LCMR Funds: DU collaborated with all the other HCP partners in the Phase II program.

B. Project Cooperators: For this workprogram, the principal partners were DU and NRCS. All staff continued to work with other partners, such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, Watershed Districts, MN Department of Natural Resources, etc. to maximize utilization of the WRP program.

VIII. DISSEMINATION: News of the project and individual accomplishments were disseminated by periodic news releases from HCP partners included in the LCMR project, and through NRCS/SWCD field offices. Articles about this program were published in Outdoor News and the Minnesota Ducks Unlimited's newsletter ("Cattails"). Information about the corridor project and WRP progress was incorporated into the NRCS WRP web page located at the following address: <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/ecs/wrp/>

IX. LOCATION: The majority of the time spent by the personnel hired through the LCMR project was in HCP Project Areas 1, 3, and 10, but some projects were located in Project Areas #6, #7 and #9.

X. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: Periodic workprogram progress reports were submitted.

XI. RESEARCH PROJECTS: N/A

Attachment A. Budget Detail for 2003 Projects

Project Title: Restoring Minnesota's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Corridors - Wetlands Reserve Program (3d part 1), Phase II

Project Manager Name: Roger Pederson

LCMR Requested Dollars: \$465,100

2003 LCMR Proposal Budget		Result 1 Budget:	Amount Spent (as of 3/30/06)	Result 1 Balance (3/30/06)	TOTAL FOR Budget ITEM		
Budget Item	Title:Contract Technical Assistance				BUDGET TOTAL:	AMOUNT SPENT TO DATE	BALANCE (3/30/06)
Wages, salaries & benefits							
	Detail						
	Project supervisor, biologists, engineers, admin support, etc.	\$19,500	\$19,500	\$ -0-	\$19,500	\$19,500	\$-0-
	Wages subtotal	\$19,500	\$19,500	\$ -0-	\$19,500	\$19,500	\$-0-
Contracts							
	Contract WRP Technicians	12,650 hours @ \$34/hr	\$430,000	\$430,000	\$ -0-	\$430,000	\$430,000 \$ -0-
	Contract subtotal	\$430,000	\$430,000	\$ -0-	\$430,000	\$430,000	\$ -0-
Other							
	Travel In State		\$11,560	\$11,560	\$-0-	\$11,560	\$11,560 \$-0-
	Equipment	Computer, ATV, survey equipment	\$-0-	\$-0-	\$-0-	\$-0-	\$-0- \$-0-
	Supplies and Miscellaneous	Cell phone, misc.	\$4,040	\$4,040	\$-0-	\$4,040	\$4,040 \$-0-
	COLUMN TOTAL		\$465,100	\$465,100	\$-0-	\$465,100	\$465,100 \$-0-

Attachment B -- Habitat Corridors Partnership PHASE II -- Individual Work Program Summary

March 2005 Report (For all completed activities thru 3/31/06)

Activity	Partner	LCMR Allocation	LCMR Expenditure	LCMR Balance	Proposed Accomplishments			Current LCMR Accomplishments			Other Funds Committed	Other Funds Expenditure	Other Funds Balance
					LCMR Acres	LCMR Miles/ Shoreline	LCMR Lakes Restored	LCMR Acres	LCMR Miles/ Shoreline	LCMR Lakes Restored			
3d2 - Wetlands Reserve Program	USDA - NRCS										5,000,000	7,699,331	

Attachment C -- Habitat Corridors Partnership PHASE II -- Individual Work Program Summary by Project Area

March 2005 Report (For all completed activities thru 3/31/06)

Work Program: Partner:	LCMR Funds						Other Funds					
	LCMR Dollars Expended	Acquisition Acres	Easement Acres	Restoration Acres	Shore Miles	Misc.	Other Funds Expended	Acquisition Acres	Easement Acres	Restoration Acres	Shore Miles	Misc.
PROJECT AREA 1 Aspen Parklands	73,116						349,315		546	3993		
PROJECT AREA 2 Mississippi Headwaters												
PROJECT AREA 3 Border Prairie	270,067						4,468,517		2,779	772		
PROJECT AREA 4 Central Lakes												
PROJECT AREA 5 Lower St. Louis River												
PROJECT AREA 6 Upper Minnesota River	28,806						711,050		484	332		
PROJECT AREA 7 Alexandria Moraine	31,482						912,525		579	116		
PROJECT AREA 8 Big Woods - North												
PROJECT AREA 9 Des Moines River Valley										111		
PROJECT AREA 10 Southern Lakes	61,630						1,257,924		649	1898		
PROJECT AREA 11 Mississippi Bluff Lands												
	465,101	0	0	0	0	0	7,699,331	0	5,037	7,222		