

**2003 Project Abstract**

For the Period Ending June 30, 2006

**TITLE:** Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors – Minnesota Valley Trust. Activity 3.2. Project Area 10 – Minnesota River Valley.**PROJECT MANAGER:** Deborah Loon**ORGANIZATION:** Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.**ADDRESS:** 2312 Seabury Avenue, Minneapolis MN 55406**WEB SITE ADDRESS:** NA**FUND:** Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund**LEGAL CITATION:** ML 2003, Ch. 128, Art. 1, Sec. 9, Subd. 5b**APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$ 290,000**Overall Project Outcome and Results

The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. completed fee title acquisition of 320 acres in Carver MN on August 9, 2005. The land will be donated to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for management as part of the Rapids Lake Unit of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The property was acquired in partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service through their Wetland Reserve Program Easement. This property will provide an ecological connection between existing Refuge properties known as the Chaska and Rapids Lake Units, as well as a public use connection.

The Minnesota Valley Refuge is developing a habitat restoration plan for the property, which includes former croplands that have been frequently flooded. The historical vegetation consisted of a combination of floodplain forest and wet meadows. Several smaller wetlands were drained, but will be restored. Likewise, the former croplands will be restored to original vegetation, mainly floodplain forest. Numerous species of wildlife will benefit from the acquisition and restoration of this tract of land. This tract is an integral part of the restoration of a 7,000-acre block of floodplain forest, wetland and bluff habitat along the Minnesota River. Many bird species, including warblers, wood ducks, mallards, bald eagles, herons, turkeys and owls will benefit from the acquisition of this land.

Public use trails will be developed, with the eventual result being a north-south trail system on the Refuge's Chaska and Rapids Lake Units. The trail system will include a new visitor and education center being developed by the Trust at the southern end of the Rapids Lake Unit. Once completed, the trail system will connect the Cities of Chaska and Carver to the new visitor and education center.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

The Minnesota Valley Trust will publicize the completion of this acquisition and plans for the lands through its newsletter and news releases to the local media. After the land is donated to the Minnesota Valley Refuge, the USFWS will publicize progress on the restoration efforts, development of trails and opportunities for public use and environmental education through news releases and updates to its website. All funding partners will be acknowledged on Refuge kiosks, including the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, as recommended by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources.

**LCMR Final Work Program Report –Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors -- Minnesota Valley Trust**

Date of Report: August 12, 2005  
Date of Next Program Update: February 1, 2006  
Date of Work Plan Approval:  
Last Amendment Approved:  
Project Completion Date: June 30, 2006

**Title:** Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors – Minnesota Valley Trust. Activity 3.2. Project Area 10 – Minnesota River Valley.

**Project Manager:** Deborah Loon  
**Affiliation:** Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.  
**Mailing Address:** 2312 Seabury Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55406  
**Telephone Number:** 612-728-3772  
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**Web Address:** NA

<b>Total Biennial Project Budget:</b>	LCMR Appropriation:	\$290,000
	Minus Amount Spent:	\$290,000
	Funds Committed:	\$0
	Equal Balance:	\$0

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2003, Chap. 128 Art. 1, Sec. 9 Subd. 5b

Metropolitan Wildlife Corridors - \$2,450,000 the first year and \$2,450,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources. \$3,700,000 ~~\$3,550,000~~ of this appropriation is for acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements with the Trust for Public Land, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Friends of the Mississippi River, Great River Greening, Minnesota Land Trust, and Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc., for the purposes of planning, improving, and protection important natural areas in the metropolitan region, as defined by Minnesota Statutes, section 473.121, subdivision 2, through grants, contracted services, conservation easements, and fee acquisition. \$500,000 of this appropriation is for an agreement with the city of Ramsey for the Trott Brook Corridor acquisition. \$800,000 of this appropriation is for an agreement with the Rice Creek Watershed District for Hardwood Creek acquisition and restoration. Land acquired with this appropriation must be sufficiently improved to meet at least minimum management standards as determined by the commissioner of natural resources. 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 identified project areas as defined in the work program. 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:** The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. completed the fee title acquisition of 320 acres in Carver MN on Tuesday, August 9, 2005. The land will be donated to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for management as part of the Rapids Lake Unit of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The property was acquired in partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service through their Wetland Reserve Program Easement. This property will provide an ecological connection between existing Refuge properties known as the Chaska and Rapids Lake Units, as well as a public use connection. The Refuge is developing a habitat restoration plan for the property. Public use trails will be developed, with the eventual result being a north-south trail system on the Refuge's Chaska and Rapids Lake Units, including the new visitor and education center being developed by the Trust at the southern end of the Rapids Lake Unit.

**IV. Outline of Project Results:**

<b>Result 1: Acquire significant habitat.</b>	<b>Allocation:</b>	<b>\$ 290,000</b>
	<b>Balance:</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>

**Completion Date:** August 9, 2005

**Final Result Status:** The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. completed fee title acquisition of 320 acres in Carver MN on August 9, 2005. The land will be donated to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for management as part of the Rapids Lake Unit of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The property was acquired in partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service through their Wetland Reserve Program Easement. This property will provide an ecological connection between existing Refuge properties known as the Chaska and Rapids Lake Units, as well as a public use connection.

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**V. TOTAL LCMR PROJECT BUDGET: (see attachment A and page 1)**

All Results:	Personnel:	\$0
All Results:	Equipment:	\$0
All Results:	Restoration:	\$
All Results:	Acquisition:	\$290,000
All Results:	Other:	\$0
<b>TOTAL BUDGET:</b>		<b>\$290,000</b>

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$3,500: NA**

**VI. PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE SPENDING**

**A. Past Spending:** No LCMR funds had been spent in the past by the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. (or the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge).

**B. Current Spending:** The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. acquired fee title to approximately 320 acres in Project Area 10 at a cost of \$1.4 million, or \$4,375 per acre. Of the total purchase price, \$579,092 was paid by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through purchase of a Wetland Reserve Program easement, done concurrently with the fee title closing.

The Trust and NRCS shared the \$27,030 spent for appraisals, survey, legal, title work and closing costs.

Plans are being developed for restoration of the habitat and for development of public use trails on the property. The NRCS will continue to partner with the Trust and the Minnesota Valley Refuge in the restoration work, as NRCS restoration funds have been committed to this project. Total anticipated spending is not known at this time.

**C. Required Match (if applicable):**

**D. Future Spending:** Over the next 10 – 11 years, the Minnesota Valley Trust will be spending funds from the settlement between the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Metropolitan Airports Commission to acquire at least 4,090 acres through fee title to expand the Minnesota Valley Refuge. We anticipate about 80% of those acres will be inside the seven-county metropolitan area, while the remainder will be outside the metro area. In addition, the Minnesota Valley Trust will expend settlement funds to restore lands and construct trails and other visitor facilities on the Refuge, including a new visitor and education center on the Rapids Lake Unit near Carver MN.

Additional funds will be sought through other conservation programs to leverage the LCMR and settlement funds for further acquisition in fee title and restoration of lands for the Minnesota Valley Refuge.

**VII. Project Partners:**

**A. Partners Receiving LCMR Funds:** Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors Partners are worked with whenever possible.

**B. Project Cooperators:** Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service of the US Department of Agriculture.

**VIII. Dissemination:** Information about our project will be shared through the Minnesota Valley Trust's newsletter, which will be sent to local, state and federal public officials, as well as other interested parties. A news release will be sent to local media announcing the acquisition.

**IX. Location:** Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors Project Area 10 (the Minnesota River Valley).

**X. Reporting requirements**

Periodic work program progress reports will be submitted not later than February 1, 2004; August 1, 2004; February 1, 2005; August 1, 2005; February 1, 2006. This report is the final work program report.

**XI. Research Projects:** NA

**Attachment A: Budget Detail for 2003 Projects - Summary and a Budget page for each partner**

**Proposal Title:** *Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors Project -- MN Valley Trust*

**Project Manager Name:** *Deborah Loon*

**LCMR Requested Dollars:** *\$290,000*

2003 LCMR Proposal Budget	<u>Result 1 Budget:</u> LCMR Funds	Amount Spent 8/12/05	Balance 8/12/05	Other Funds:	
	<i>Acquire significant habitat in MN River Valley (Area 10)</i>				
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>					<b>TOTAL FOR BUDGET ITEM</b>
Land acquisition - 66 acres	\$ 290,000	\$ 290,000	\$ -		
Land acquisition - 254 acres				1,110,602	
Development - parking lot, signage, trail				0	
Restoration - 320 acres				0	
Other - appraisal, survey, title, legal				27,030	
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 290,000</b>	<b>\$ 290,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 1,137,632</b>	