

2007 Work Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2007

PROJECT TITLE: Metro Conservation Corridors Phase III: Scientific and Natural Areas (2.5 & 3.6)
Project Manager: Margaret (Peggy) Booth
Affiliation: MN Dept of Natural Resources – Div. of Ecological Resources
Mailing Address: 500 Lafayette Rd, Box 25
City / State / Zip : St. Paul, MN 55155-4025
Telephone Number: 651-259-5088
E-mail Address: peggy.booth@dnr.state.mn.us
FAX Number: 651-296-1811
Web Page Address: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snas/index.html>
Funding Source: Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund

Legal Citation: ML 2007, Chap. 30, Sec. 2, Subd. 4(c)

Appropriation Language: (c) Metro Conservation Corridors - Phase III

\$2,500,000 is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements with The Trust for Public Land; Friends of the Mississippi River; Great River Greening; Minnesota Land Trust; Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.; Trout Unlimited; and Friends of the Minnesota Valley for the purposes of planning, restoring, and protecting important natural areas in the metropolitan region, as defined by Minnesota Statutes, section 473.121, subdivision 2, and portions of the surrounding counties, through grants, contracted services, conservation easements, and fee acquisition. Land acquired with this appropriation must be sufficiently improved to meet at least minimum management standards as determined by the commissioner. Expenditures are limited to the identified project corridor 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. All conservation easements must be perpetual and have a natural resource management plan. 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 similarly designate any lands acquired in less than fee title.

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$243,000

Overall Project Outcome & Results

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) Program worked with the Trust for Public Land (Metro Conservation Corridors partner) to acquire a 16 acre portion of a larger acquisition of 85.2 acres of high priority native habitat designated as the new Franconia Bluffs SNA. The sites acquired contain native plant communities, such as mesic oak and maple-basswood forests and habitat for rare plant and animal species including red-shouldered hawk, Cerulean warbler, Acadian flycatcher, Louisiana waterthrush, bald eagle, and wood turtle; and adjoins the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway which contains four state-listed fish species documented near the SNA and a total of 40 native mussel species, two of which are federally- and state-endangered;

The SNA Program and its partners (including Metro Corridor partners Friends of the Mississippi River) restored and enhanced native habitat on over 429 acres at 12 SNAs within the Metro Corridors Focus Area. Specific accomplishments are: 13 acres of prairie restoration work (local

ecotype seed collection from onsite or within 20 miles and seeding) at two sites in Washington and Dakota Counties; 197 acres of prescribed burns (and associated burn break development) at 6 SNAs in Goodhue and Washington Counties; and 219 acres of exotics species removal at 9 sites in Carver, Hennepin, Goodhue, and Washington Counties. This work is necessary to prevent the loss of important species, plant communities and features.

The SNA goal is to preserve and perpetuate the ecological diversity of Minnesota's heritage for scientific study, education, and nature observation. Over 3000 acres in 24 SNAs have been designated within Metro Conservation Corridors Focus Area. These SNAs are managed to protect elements of natural diversity such as rare and endangered plant and animal species, undisturbed plant communities, and geological features.

Project Results Use & Dissemination

SNA's partner – the Trust for Public Land – issued a press release for each acquisition completed through this project.

Trust Fund 2007 Work Program Final Report

Date of Report: 11/13/09

Trust Fund 2007 Work Program Final Report

Project Completion Date: 6/30/09

I. PROJECT TITLE: Metro Conservation Corridors Phase III:
Scientific and Natural Areas (2.5 and 3.6)
Project Manager: Margaret (Peggy) Booth
Affiliation: MN Dept of Natural Resources – Div. of Ecological Resources
Mailing Address: 500 Lafayette Rd, Box 25
City / State / Zip : St. Paul, MN 55155-4025
Telephone Number: 651-259-5088
E-mail Address: peggy.booth@dnr.state.mn.us
FAX Number: 651-296-1811
Web Page address: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snas/index.html>

Location: Current and proposed Scientific and Natural Areas within mapped Focus Area in the counties of Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Goodhue, Hennepin, Isanti, LeSueur, Nicollet, Ramsey, Rice, Scott, Sherburne, Sibley, Washington and Wright. See Figure 1.

Total Trust Fund Project Budget:	Trust Fund Appropriation:	\$243,000
	Minus Amount Spent:	\$243,000
	Equal Balance:	\$0

Legal Citation: ML 2007, Chap. 30, Sec. 2, Subd. 4(c)

Appropriation Language:

Appropriation Language: (c) Metro Conservation Corridors - Phase III
\$2,500,000 is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements with The Trust for Public Land; Friends of the Mississippi River; Great River Greening; Minnesota Land Trust; Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.; Trout Unlimited; and Friends of the Minnesota Valley for the purposes of planning, restoring, and protecting important natural areas in the metropolitan region, as defined by Minnesota Statutes, section 473.121, subdivision 2, and portions of the surrounding counties, through grants, contracted services, conservation easements, and fee acquisition. Land acquired with this appropriation must be sufficiently improved to meet at least minimum management standards as determined by the commissioner. Expenditures are limited to the identified project corridor 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. All conservation easements must be perpetual and have a natural resource management plan. 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 similarly designate any lands acquired in less than fee title.

II & III. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) Program worked with the Trust for Public Land (Metro Conservation Corridors partner) to acquire 85.2 acres (16 acres directly through these funds) of high priority native habitat which were designated as the new Franconia Bluffs SNA. The sites acquired contain native plant communities, such as mesic oak and maple-basswood forests and habitat for rare plant and animal species including red-shouldered hawk, Cerulean warbler, Acadian flycatcher, Louisiana waterthrush, bald eagle, and wood turtle; and adjoins the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway which contains four state-listed fish species documented near the SNA and a total of 40 native mussel species, two of which are federally- and state-endangered;

The SNA Program and its partners (including Metro Corridor partners Friends of the Mississippi River) restored and enhanced native habitat on over 429 acres at 12 SNAs within the Metro Corridors Focus Area. Specific accomplishments are: 13 acres of prairie restoration work (local ecotype seed collection from onsite or within 20 miles and seeding) at two sites in Washington and Dakota Counties; 197 acres of prescribed burns (and associated burn break development) at 6 SNAs in Goodhue and Washington Counties; and 219 acres of exotics species removal at 9 sites in Carver, Hennepin, Goodhue, and Washington Counties. This work is necessary to prevent the loss of important species, plant communities and features.

The SNA goal is to preserve and perpetuate the ecological diversity of Minnesota's heritage for scientific study, education, and nature observation. Over 3000 acres in 24 SNAs have been designated within Metro Conservation Corridors Focus Area. These SNAs are managed to protect elements of natural diversity such as rare and endangered plant and animal species, undisturbed plant communities, and geological features.

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

Result 1: N/A

Result 2: Scientific & Natural Area (SNA) Restoration & Enhancement

The SNA Program and its partners (including Metro Corridor partners Friends of the Mississippi River) restored and enhanced native habitat on over 429 acres (not counting accomplishment acres done through other partners or funding). Work was targeted at prairie restoration and enhancement and exotics species removal. This work is necessary to prevent the loss of important species, plant communities and features from past land use practices (prior to SNA designation), lack of natural disturbance regimes, and encroachment by invasives species. Project crew and partner activities included seed collection (local ecotype from onsite or within 20

miles), planting, removal of exotics, control of woody encroachment, and prescribed burns.

Summary Budget Information for Result 2:

Trust Fund Budget:	\$ 34,888
Amount Spent:	\$ 34,888
Balance:	\$ 0

Final Report Summary 6/30/2009:

The SNA goal is to preserve and perpetuate the ecological diversity of Minnesota's heritage for scientific study, education, and nature observation. To date, 24 SNAs encompassing over 3000 acres have been designated within Metro Conservation Corridors Focus Area. These SNAs are managed to protect elements of natural diversity such as rare and endangered plant and animal species, undisturbed plant communities, and geological features.

Restoration and enhancement activities on 429 acres at 12 SNAs were completed with this appropriation as follows:

- 197 acres of prescribed burns (and associated burn break development) at River Terrace Prairie (17 ac), Spring Creek Prairie (42 ac), and Cannon River Turtle Preserve (17.5 ac) SNAs (Goodhue Co); Grey Cloud Dunes (71 ac), St. Croix Savanna (31.5 ac), and Lost Valley Prairie (18 ac) SNAs (Washington Co);
- 219 acres of exotics species removal at Seminary Fen** SNA (4 ac – Carver Co); Spring Creek Prairie** SNA (Goodhue Co); Wood-Rill SNA (200 ac – Hennepin Co); Hastings Sand Coulee (1 ac – Dakota Co); Savage Fen (Scott Co); Falls Creek SNA, Lost Valley Prairie** (2 ac), St. Croix Savanna** (11 ac), and Grey Cloud Dunes** (1 ac) SNAs (Washington Co); and
- 13 acres of prairie restoration work (seeding only) at Pine Bend Bluffs (3 ac – Dakota Co); and Lost Valley Prairie (10 ac – Washington Co; supplemented by donated time by SNA volunteers).

Note: ** additional exotics control activities (acres not counted here) were also completed on these sites during this timeframe using 2005 and 2006 bonding funds. Also, prairie restoration work above was supplemented by Friends of the Mississippi River work funded by Remediation Grant projects at Pine Bend Bluffs.

Result 3: Scientific & Natural Area (SNA) Acquisition.

The SNA program in cooperation with the Trust for Public Land acquired 85.2 acres (16 acres directly through this funding) of high priority native habitat which was designated as Franconia Bluffs SNA. Priority was given to fee acquisition both protecting the resources and providing for public access. Acquisition was initially targeted at four primary locations: a) the largest remaining unprotected parcel of Mississippi River frontage within the Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area (a MCBS-mapped natural area of bluffs, remnant white pines and other forests, as well as prairies with listed species in Dakota County), b) an addition of MCBS mapped native prairie and ravines adjoining the Lost Valley SNA (Washington County), c) additional lands supporting rare animal and plant species at Hastings Sand Coulee (Dakota County); and d) a proposed new Franconia Bluffs SNA in Chisago County overlooking the St Croix River (Chisago County).

The DNR has a long-range plan for SNA acquisition and designation based upon the Natural Heritage data system, Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS), the Ecological Classification, and the Minnesota Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. All lands acquired as an SNA must have an ecological evaluation approved by the Commissioner's Advisory Committee.

Summary Budget Information for Result 3:

Trust Fund Budget:	\$208,112
Amount Spent:	\$208,112
Balance:	\$ 0

Final Report Summary 6/30/2009: Two parcels totaling 85.2 acres in Franconia Township in Chisago County were acquired in part through funding through collaboration with Metro Corridors partner – the Trust for Public Land – and designated as the new Franconia Bluffs SNA. These acquisitions were approved by the township and county boards and are both open to public hunting.

The new Franconia Bluffs SNA is within the northern end of 6-mile long Franconia St. Croix Corridor project area that was evaluated by the DNR's Natural Heritage Program (November 2005) and approved by the Commissioner's Advisory Committee (December 2005) for potential protection through Scientific and Natural Area designation. The St Croix valley and adjoining lands are a resource of national significance. This part of the St Croix River is home to 4 species of state-listed fish species and 40 species of native mussels, two of which are federal and state endangered species. Furthermore, the wooded bluffs of Franconia Township are habitat for many birds and rare plants, including wood turtles. Much of the bottomlands along this 6-mile stretch of river are protected through the St Croix National Scenic Riverway. But, the adjoining bluffs and creek valleys (such as acquired here) are incredibly important wildlife habitat that is very vulnerable to impacts by development.

The new Franconia Bluffs SNA contains native plant communities such as Southern Dry-Mesic Oak Forest, Southern Dry-Mesic Oak (Maple) Woodland, and Maple-Basswood Forest (East Central) and habitat for rare plant and animal species including red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), Cerulean warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*), Acadian flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*), Louisiana waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and wood turtle (*Gleyptemys insculpta*).

Transaction costs totaling \$26,597 (including boundary survey costs of \$16.6K) from this appropriation to the SNA program was expended towards acquisition of the 48-acre Franconia Bluffs – Parcel 1 by the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and conveyed to the DNR on June 2, 2008. TPL used its 2005 Metro Corridors LCCMR funds to pay the landowner. This site was designated as the Franconia Bluffs SNA on June 19, 2008. The boundary survey for the new Franconia Bluffs SNA was completed in September 2008 with this funding (and boundary signs installed using 2008

bonding). The LCCMR accomplishment acres for this acquisition are all counted as 2005 funding by TPL.

The 37.2-acre Franconia Bluffs – Parcel 2 was acquired by the Trust for Public Land and conveyed to the DNR on June 4, 2009 and designated as SNA on June 29, 2009. The landowner donated \$8,105 of its value and DNR paid all the direct landowner costs (\$385,000) using a combination of this fund (42.3% - 15.7 acres) and the 2008 LCCMR SNA Statewide funding (55.7% - 20.7 acres) – with costs summarized in the table below. The LCCMR members and staff visited this site on June 17, 2009. The map of both parcels is attached which also shows areas of the site for restoration and enhancement through other funding.

Franconia Bluffs SNA – Parcel 2 Funding Sources	\$s Spent	Pro-rated %	Pro-rated Acres
2007 LCCMR Metro Corridors/SNA appropriation – Direct Cost	\$166,251	42.29%	15.73
2008 LCCMR SNA Statewide – Direct Cost	\$218,749	55.65%	20.70
Landowner Donation	\$8,105	2.06%	0.77
SUBTOTAL – Direct Fee Acquisition	\$393,105	100.00%	37.20
2007 LCCMR – SNA Real Estate Transaction \$s (<i>other transaction costs to be reported as part of 2008 report</i>)	\$5,803		
TPL Real Estate Transaction \$s (donated)	\$23,953		

Work was also initiated through using \$9,461 of this funding to acquire several other parcels which could not be completed under this appropriation: a proposed addition to the Lost Valley Prairie SNA (with the offer turned down by the landowner, but was acquired later in 2009 with state bonding); a proposed addition to Hastings Sand Coulee (with the offer turned down by the landowner); a proposed addition to Pine Bend Bluffs SNA (which was moved to other funding because of delays in the project).

V. TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET:

Staff or Contract Services: \$28,145 (for 0.7 FTE of SNA project crew, paid almost exclusively with special project funds, to carry out restoration & development work; and less than .001 FTE unclassified acquisition specialist)

Equipment: \$3,433 (truck, tractor & equipment fleet charges & incidental parts for chainsaws, tractor, & vehicles needed for restoration & development work)

Development: \$0 (signs, fencing, and other supplies needed to bring sites up to minimum standards) – costs were or will be paid through bonding.

Restoration: \$3,496 (towards work on 429 acres – various supplies & direct expenses for restoration field work, including travel expenses)

Acquisition, including easements: \$207,926 (for 85 acres acquired in fee and designated as SNA – 16 acres fully paid with these funds; including transaction costs and some travel expenses)

TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET: \$ 243,000

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$3,500: N/A

VI. OTHER FUNDS & PARTNERS:

A. Project Partners: SNA developed and implemented its projects in cooperation with Friends of the Mississippi River and The Trust for Public Land. SNA also involved the Minnesota Conservation Corps, Sentence to Serve, local groups, and volunteers in project implementation.

B. Other Funds Proposed to be Spent during the Project Period:

Restoration/enhancement projects include DNR general funding support and bonding and involved NGO partners using other state or non-state funds (not counted in accomplishment acres). Because landowners declined acquisition offers on two projects and a third project was delayed past the timeframe of this appropriation, this project did not generate any county match and landowner donations, nor was Metro Greenways LCCMR or bonding funds used.

C. Past Spending: SNA acquisition and development appropriations received July 2005-June 2007: LCMR SNA Metro Corridors Phase II: \$300,000; 2005 Bonding (primarily non-Metro): \$2,000,000. SNA general fund for Central Region is approximately \$110,000 annually for region staff, operations and crew.

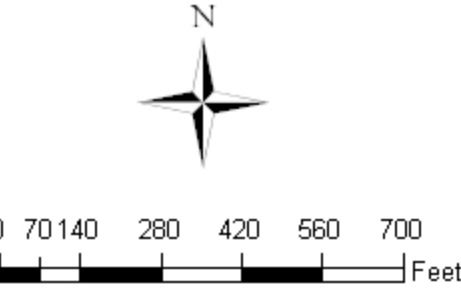
D. Time: Restoration work was completed by June 2008; acquisition projects were completed in June 2009.

VII. DISSEMINATION: SNA's partner – the Trust for Public Land – issued a press release for each acquisition completed through this project.

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: Periodic work program progress reports were completed by around February 1st and August 1st each year, starting with February 1, 2008. This is the final work program report and associated products.

Attachment A: Budget Detail for 2007 Projects		FINAL						
Project Title: Metro Conservation Corridors Phase III: Scientific and Natural Areas (2.5 and 3.6)								
Project Manager Name: Margaret (Peggy) Booth								
Trust Fund Appropriation: \$ 243,000								
1) See list of non-eligible expenses, do not include any of these items in your budget sheet								
2) Remove any budget item lines not applicable								
2007 Trust Fund Budget	<u>Result 2</u> <u>Budget:</u>	Amount Spent (FINAL)	Balance (FINAL)	<u>Result 3</u> <u>Budget:</u>	Amount Spent (FINAL)	Balance (FINAL)	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM	Restoration			Protection				
PERSONNEL: wages and benefits: Project crews (paid almost exclusively with special project funds) to carry out restoration and enhancement, amounting to .6 FTE over the life of the project. Fringe varies from 14.8 -18%.	\$ 27,959	\$ 27,959	\$ -	\$ 186	\$ 186	\$ -	\$ 28,145	\$ -
Equipment / Tools: truck, tractor & equipment fleet charges & incidental parts for chainsaws, tractor, vehicles, etc.	\$ 3,433	\$ 3,433	\$ -			\$ -	\$ 3,433	\$ -
Land acquisition			\$ -	\$ 166,251	\$ 166,251	\$ -	\$ 166,251	\$ -
Land rights acquisition (less than fee)			\$ -			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Professional Services for Acq. - including attorney general & closing company costs			\$ -	\$ 41,648	\$ 41,648	\$ -	\$ 41,648	\$ -
Other Supplies: e.g. fencing, exclosure mats, signs, seeds, gloves, chemical, etc	\$ 2,460	\$ 2,460	\$ -			\$ -	\$ 2,460	\$ -
Travel expenses in Minnesota	\$ 668	\$ 668	\$ -	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ -	\$ 695	\$ -
Other land improvement: direct expenses not included above for purposes of meeting min. standards & restoration	\$ 368	\$ 368	\$ -			\$ -	\$ 368	\$ -
COLUMN TOTAL	\$ 34,888	\$ 34,888	\$ -	\$ 208,112	\$ 208,112	\$ -	\$ 243,000	\$ -

Franconia Bluffs SNA



Legend

Signs

- Boundary (yellow square)
- Interpretive (blue square)
- R&R (orange square)
- Wood Routed (brown square with a cross)

Development Features

- parking lot (orange rectangle)

Field Work Areas

- (green outline)

SNA Boundaries

- (red outline)

Contours

- (thin white lines)

2008 infrared aerial

