

## **2008 Project Abstract**

For the Period Ending June 30, 2011

**PROJECT TITLE:** Preserving the Avon Hills Landscape

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Thomas Kroll

**AFFILIATION:** Saint John's Arboretum and University

**MAILING ADDRESS:** Box 3000

**CITY/STATE/ZIP:** Collegeville, MN 56321

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**FUNDING SOURCE:** Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

**LEGAL CITATION:** ML 2008, Chap. 367, Sec. 2, Subd.3 (d).

**APPROPRIATION AMOUNT:** \$ 337,000

### **Overall Project Outcome and Results**

The Avon Hills Initiative is a group of local citizens interested in preserving the rural nature of the 50,000 acre Avon Hills 15 miles west of St. Cloud. The group helped steer this project made possible with Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund support. Saint John's provided the staff and fiscal support. This project had three goals:

1) Increase the level of interest and understanding of all citizens and landowners interested in the Avon Hills, mostly through conferences. Outcome: Three day-long conferences were held with nearly 900 total attendees indicating very strong local support.

2) Negotiate and complete acquisition of permanent conservation easements. Outcome: Six conservation easements totaling 400 high quality forest, wetland, and grassland acres in Stearns County were successfully enacted. Two of the easements, totaling 99 acres, were purchased, and four of the easements, totaling 301 acres, were donated by the landowners. These acres contain a total of more than two miles of shoreline on streams, ponds, and lakes, and provide habitat to a variety of species, including several of greatest conservation need. Additionally, through this process we tested a new method for prioritizing and acquiring easements for the best value. Called MMAPLE, the Minnesota Multi-faceted Approach for Prioritizing Land Easements, the system weighs the measurable environmental benefits against the cost that the current landowner wants to provide a permanent easement on that land. Using sealed bids, each landowner chooses their own price which results in lower costs and fewer complaints from landowners and taxpayers about the "fairness" or "price" of the easement process.

3) Provide support for township and county officials to review and change zoning and ordinances that impeded protection of the open space. Outcome: Two "conservation design" conferences for officials and the public as well as reviews of the existing ordinances by professionals resulted in positive feedback from the participants. This gradual education helped create sufficient support for Stearns County to pass a land-use ordinance that requires new housing developments in the Avon Hills to permanently preserve at least 80% of the land. This is believed to be the highest standard in the USA.

### **Project Results Use and Dissemination**

The success of the land use concepts used in the Avon Hills of Stearns County to preserve open space and working forests and farms has been disseminated in a variety of ways. Staff, officials, and citizens have been asked to discuss the concepts with neighboring county officials and at professional meetings.

Todd County, a neighboring county, sent several officials to the land use conferences and has gradually begun to implement similar practices in their county.

The MMAPLE method developed under this grant is being used to apply for a Outdoor Heritage Fund grant for more easements.

# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund 2008 Work Program Final Report

**Date of Report:** July 29, 2011

**Final Report:**

**Date of Work program Approval:** June 10, 2008

**Project Completion Date:** June 30, 2011

**I. PROJECT TITLE:** Preserving the Avon Hills Landscape

**Project Manager:** Thomas Kroll

**Affiliation:** Land Manager and Arboretum Director

**Mailing Address:** Saint John's Arboretum, Collegeville, MN 56321-3000

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**Web Page Address:**

[www.csbsju.edu/Arboretum/Education/Community/AvonHillsInitiative.htm](http://www.csbsju.edu/Arboretum/Education/Community/AvonHillsInitiative.htm)

**Location:** The Avon Hills landscape, located in Stearns County, encompasses approximately 80 square miles in Avon, Saint Joseph, Collegeville, and Saint Wendel townships. See attached project map.

**Total Trust Fund Project Budget: Trust Fund Appropriation:** \$ 337,000

**Total Spent to Date:** \$ 304,412

**Ending Balance:** \$ 32,588

*(See Attached budget detail, Appendix A)*

**Legal Citation:** ML 2008, Chap. 367, Sec. 2, Subd.3 (d).

**Appropriation Language:** Preserving the Avon Hills Landscape

\$337,000 is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for a grant to Saint John's Arboretum and University for community outreach, in cooperation with the Minnesota Land Trust; conservation easements, in cooperation with the Minnesota Land Trust; and local ordinance reviews and recommendations for the Avon Hills landscape in Stearns County. A list of proposed fee title and easement acquisitions must be provided as part of the required work program. All funding for conservation easements must include a long-term stewardship plan and appropriate funding for monitoring. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2011, 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:**

### **Overall Project Outcome and Results**

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- 1) Increase the level of interest and understanding of all citizens and landowners interested in the Avon Hills, mostly through conferences. Outcome: Three day-long conferences were held with nearly 900 total attendees indicating very strong local support.
- 2) Negotiate and complete acquisition of permanent conservation easements. Outcome: Six conservation easements totaling 400 high quality forest, wetland, and grassland acres in Stearns County were successfully enacted. Two of the easements, totaling 99 acres, were purchased, and four of the easements, totaling 301 acres, were donated by the landowners. These acres contain a total of more than two miles of shoreline on streams, ponds, and lakes, and provide habitat to a variety of species, including several of greatest conservation need. Additionally, through this process we tested a new method for prioritizing and acquiring easements for the best value. Called MMAPLE, the Minnesota Multi-faceted Approach for Prioritizing Land Easements, the system weighs the measurable environmental benefits against the cost that the current landowner wants to provide a permanent easement on that land. Using sealed bids, each landowner chooses their own price which results in lower costs and fewer complaints from landowners and taxpayers about the "fairness" or "price" of the easement process.
- 3) Provide support for township and county officials to review and change zoning and ordinances that impeded protection of the open space. Outcome: Two "conservation design" conferences for officials and the public as well as reviews of the existing ordinances by professionals resulted in positive feedback from the participants. This gradual education helped create sufficient support for Stearns County to pass a land-use ordinance that requires new housing developments in the Avon Hills to permanently preserve at least 80% of the land. This is believed to be the highest standard in the USA.

### **Project Results Use and Dissemination**

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Todd County, a neighboring county, sent several officials to the land use conferences and has gradually begun to implement similar practices in their county.

The MMAPLE method developed under this grant is being used to apply for an Outdoor Heritage Fund grant for more easements.

**IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:**

**Result 1: Community Outreach and Communication**

**Description:**

Facilitate communication among landowners, environmental groups, local units of government, and others within the Avon Hills landscape to promote comprehensive planning and zoning and environmental awareness that results in land conservation and open space protection. Publish an Avon Hills Initiative (AHI) newsletter; implement at least two conferences regarding land protection, ecological principles, and land stewardship. Promote and secure the adoption of local government comprehensive land use plans and ordinances that are effective in protecting open space, habitat, water quality, scenic zones, working forests, and other conservation benefits.

**Summary Budget Information for Result 1:** Trust Fund Budget: \$ 61,000  
 Total Spent to date: \$ 61,000  
 Balance: \$ 0

**Deliverable**

See following to be completed by applicants staff or a contractor or partner working with the applicant :

**Completion Date Budget Status**

All ongoing through June 2011 \$61,000 N/A

Results-Oriented Billing Deliverables:

	Amount paid per result	Minimum Over 3 year contract	Maximum
1-1. Avon Hills Initiative Newsletter writing, publication, and mailing to at least 300 households and organizations.	\$1,500 per newsletter	6 newsletters	12 newsletters
1-2. Arboretum staff assistance to AHI and participation related to land use, land preservation, land stewardship, open space, easements, zoning, taxation, etc. for AHI meetings, township, county, state meetings, and other organizations requesting information.	\$250 per meeting/event/activity	75 Activities	225 Activities
1-3. Conferences on land use, land preservation, and land stewardship, etc. (Must be at least one-day each)	\$7,500 per conference	2 Conferences	4 Conferences

1-4. Avon Hills Initiative group meetings for all members and interested parties to advance land use initiatives.	\$1,500 per meeting	0 Meetings	4 Meetings
1-5. Passage of a revised Stearns County Comprehensive Land Use Plan with provisions to promote innovations in land stewardship and open space preservation in the Avon Hills.	\$5,000 per adoption by County Board	0 Adoptions	1 Adoption
1-6. Passage of new Stearns County Ordinances to enact the County Comp Plan with provisions to promote innovations in land stewardship and open space preservation in the Avon Hills.	\$5,000 per adoption by County Board	0 Adoptions	1 Adoption
1-7. Passage of a revised Township(s) Comprehensive Land Use Plan with provisions to promote innovations in land stewardship and open space preservation in the Avon Hills.	\$5,000 per adoption by a Township Board (Limited to one per Township)	0 Adoptions	4 Adoptions
1-8. Passage of new Township(s) Ordinances to enact the County Comp Plan with provisions to promote innovations in land stewardship and open space preservation in the Avon Hills.	\$5,000 per adoption by a Township Board (Limited to one per Township)	0 Adoptions	4 Adoptions
1-9. Passage of a revised City(s) Comprehensive Land Use Plan with provisions to promote innovations in land stewardship and open space preservation in the Avon Hills.	\$5,000 per adoption by a City Council (Limited to one per City)	0 Adoptions	2 Adoptions
1-10. Passage of new City(s) Ordinances to enact the City Comp Plan with provisions to promote innovations in land stewardship and open space preservation in the Avon Hills.	\$5,000 per adoption by a City Council (Limited to one per City)	0 Adoptions	2 Adoptions

**Result 1 Final Report Summary:**

The exciting news of this result is that citizen/landowner participation in this project started high and got even higher. This is best told by the participation in the annual Avon Hills Initiative conferences. While open to anyone and advertising was done in public forums, the direct mailing was directed to the landowners of the townships in the Avon Hills and it was those landowners who made up the majority of attendees. Getting 300 local people to attend any meeting would have to be deemed a success, but getting 900 to attend over 3 years and actually “selling out” the space on occasion indicates very strong public interest and support.

These conferences provided education which increased the interest and created support for preserving the open spaces of the Avon Hills. That support resulted in a multi-year process that saw a full revision of the Stearns County Ordinances which reflected the desire for more land protection. The new ordinance created a conservation overlay district option which was voluntarily enacted by Avon and Collegetown Townships covering the majority of the Avon Hills. See

<http://www.co.stearns.mn.us/Environment/LandUseandAgriculture/PlanningandZoning>

As part of that overlay district, developers must permanently preserve 80% of the land they are developing as open space /working forests /working farms. In return they may receive extra density on the 20% they are developing. This is one of the most positive ordinances in the USA for preserving open space.

## Result 2: Complete New Conservation Easements

### Description:

Saint John's Arboretum will partner with the MN Land Trust (MLT) to permanently protect land within the Avon Hills landscape by 1) identifying and contacting interested landowners; 2) negotiating and completing 6-10 permanent conservation easements on up to 450-1,000 acres of land; and 3) dedicating funds for the perpetual monitoring, management and enforcement of the easements.

St. John's Arboretum and the Land Trust will work with landowners willing to protect their land through perpetual conservation easements drafted to: prohibit land uses that could negatively impact identified important riparian, habitat, or scenic values, require natural resource habitat management plans where appropriate, and direct the use of native vegetation where appropriate in conjunction with any required restoration. We will work with donated easements whenever possible but may also purchase easements where necessary.

The budget incorporates the critical components of an easement program: identifying and negotiating with landowners, drafting and completing easements, documenting property conditions, and monitoring and enforcing easements in perpetuity by dedicating funds for long-term easement stewardship.

Funds will be used for staff time, direct payments to landowners, and transactional expenses such as appraisals, title review, and mapping. Funds also may be requested for the Stewardship and Enforcement Fund to provide for the long-term management and enforcement of easements on a project-by-project basis. The Land Trust will estimate anticipated annual expenses for each project and the investment needed to generate annual income sufficient to cover expenses in perpetuity--all in accordance with Land Trust policies and procedures. The Land Trust will report to LCCMR annually on the status of the Stewardship and Enforcement Fund and the easements acquired with funds from this grant.

<b>Summary Budget Information for Result 2:</b>	Trust Fund Budget:	\$ 256,000
	Total Spent to date:	\$ 225,053
	Balance:	\$ 30,947

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Status</b>
2-1. Identify and contact landowners (Saint John's)	Ongoing through June 30, 2011	\$ 29,500	N/A

Saint John's will deliver to the MN Land Trust the names and information about Avon Hills landowners interested in meeting with the MN Land Trust regarding a conservation easement.

Amount paid per result

\$30 per acre handed off to the MN Land Trust



2-2. Follow up contacts with landowners (as negotiated between MLT and LCCMR)	Ongoing through June 30, 2011	\$10,000
2-3. Negotiate, draft, and complete 6-10 easements, including completion of baseline documentation (as negotiated between MLT and LCCMR)	June 30, 2011	\$150,500
2-4. Dedicate funds for easement Stewardship (MN Land Trust) (as negotiated between MLT and LCCMR)	June 30, 2011	\$66,000

## **Result 2 Final Report Summary:**

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>450 acres</b>
<b>Number of Easements Completed:</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Total Acres of Easements Completed:</b>	<b>400</b>

(See attached: Avon Hills Completed Project Summaries)

(See attached: Avon Hills Completed Project Map)

(See attached: Avon Hills Final Data Sheet of Purchased Easements)

Permanent easements are clearly the best way to assure that open space on private land is protected for future generations. As the concept of easements was not well known at the start of the project in the Avon Hills, time was spent early on teaching landowners about the value and technicalities of easements. Local staff met with local landowners on an individual basis and the merits of donated easements were promoted for 2 ½ years. This did result in 4 donated easements totaling 301 acres. We entered in advanced conversations with 16 landowners which shows there was interest, but most owners wanted something in return for granting a permanent easement.

The language of our grant also allowed for the purchase of easements. With only 4 months left in the program, we determined that it would be best to seek landowners that would be willing to sell an easement.

LCCMR staff approved a novel approach to acquire easements using a systematic evaluation that compares environmental benefits to easement cost. We named this ranking system the Minnesota Multi-faceted Approach for Prioritizing Land Easements (MMAPE). This system works especially well in landscapes with a fair number of quality properties and where using easements to add more total acres to the conservation estate is more important than getting an easement on any specific, pre-selected tract.

The MMAPLE Technique: The MMAPLE system was developed using ecological experts to define and rate the environmental qualities and benefits most sought from land within the Avon Hills (e.g. shoreline, land with identified Sites of Biodiversity Significance (SOBS), adjacency to other protected properties, etc.). All of the environmental rating factors are based on existing data that is easy to verify using maps and aerial photos.

For those properties which meet the minimum threshold of environmental benefits, MMAPLE uses a market-based approach, asking landowners to submit a sealed bid for the lowest price they will accept for a conservation easement. The opportunity to bid and the bidding deadline will be publically announced so anyone with qualified land may participate.

Prior to bidding, landowners will be able to visit with our organization to learn about easements and receive an environmental benefits score for their land to determine if their land is qualified. They will also receive a bidding form and will be able to see how different bids might affect their priority for receiving an easement. Our organization will not provide any advice on what a landowner should bid. We will explain that no payments will be made above the appraised value of an easement.

MMAPLE will prioritize easements by comparing the environmental benefits that are inherent to a specific parcel with the easement cost of the landowner's bid for that parcel. This method assures that high quality sites receive easements at the lowest cost and achieves the best value for the public funding.

Benefits of using a process like MMAPLE:

- MMAPLE creates a "Conservation Value Rating" for each parcel which is the ratio of environmental benefits on the parcel compared to the easement costs.
  - Using this ratio as the Conservation Value Rating allows a straight-forward comparison of multiple parcels.
- MMAPLE requires sealed bidding from the landowners offering parcels.
  - Reduces easement cost by letting landowners establish their lowest price (Note: limits are established so no bid can exceed the appraised value or some percent of the appraised value.).
  - Eliminates complaints that bureaucrats are setting the prices.
  - Eliminates gossip and hard feelings about how or why Landowner A got paid more than Landowner B.
  - Eliminates need for complex formulas to establish "fair" easement value (only the maximum needs to be established.).
  - Uses a fixed amount of funding most efficiently.
- MMAPLE uses natural resource experts to create the scoring system for rating the local natural resources.
  - Uses only existing data and aerial photo measurements for the resources.
  - Can be completed and easily explained in 30 minutes in the landowner's kitchen.

- Scoring can be targeted to the funder's priorities.

Example:

Each of the following landowners has 100 acres within the target landscape. Land is worth \$4,000/acre in this landscape. Each parcel has different natural resource features and would provide different environmental benefits if enrolled in a conservation easement. Each of the properties meets the minimum threshold of natural resource benefits. Let's assume that \$160,000 has been allocated to this landscape for this round of bidding.

- Bob's land is ecologically very nice and has 10,000 environmental benefit points as scored. Equally importantly, Bob is willing to accept \$500/acre for an easement. His "Conservation Value Rating" is 10,000/500 or 20.
- Julie's land has 8,000 environmental benefit points as scored. Julie wants \$2,000/acre for an easement. Her "Conservation Value Rating" is 8000/2000 or 4.
- Jack's land has 5,000 environmental benefit points as scored and Jack wants \$1,000/acre for an easement. His "Conservation Value Rating" is 5000/1000 or 5.
- Rachel's land has the minimum 1,000 environmental benefit points as scored. Rachel is really interested in conservation and wants only \$100/acre for an easement. Her "Conservation Value Rating" is 1000/100 or 10.

Under the MMAPLE system, we begin funding with the highest Conservation Value Rating. (Conservation Value Rating = the ratio of Environmental Benefit Points / \$ per acre)

- First, we would fund Bob's land using \$50,000. (Conservation Value Rating = 20)
- Next, we would fund Rachel's land using \$10,000. (Conservation Value Rating = 10)
- Next, we would fund Jack's land using \$100,000, (Conservation Value Rating = 5)
- The funding would now be gone and we would not fund an easement for Julie's land. However she may choose to bid in future rounds if funding is again available and she may choose to lower her bid in a future round to increase her chance of being accepted.

More information, including an easement handout, landowner application, and the MMAPLE bidding worksheet are available on the Avon Hills Initiative web site:

<https://www.csbsju.edu/Arboretum/Education/Community/AvonHillsInitiative/Events/Easements.htm>

**Result 3: Local Ordinance Reviews and Field Visits**

**Description:**

To best protect landscapes, local ordinances need to actually carry out the lofty intentions expressed in most comprehensive land-use plans. Funding will be available to up to two cities, four townships, and Stearns Co. to submit draft comprehensive plans and ordinances for review by Randall Arendt (or other recognized expert) on land-use planning for conservation.

<b>Summary Budget Information for Result 3:</b>	Trust Fund Budget:	\$ 20,000
	Total Spent to date:	\$ 18,359
	Balance:	\$ 1,641

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Status</b>
1. Ordinance reviews	6/30/11	20,000	N/A
Results-Oriented Billing Deliverables:			Minimum    Maximum
		Amount paid per result	Over 3 year contract
Professional review and written suggestions of draft county, township, or city comp plans or ordinances by a recognized expert such as Randall Arendt.		\$4,000 per review	0    5 reviews

**Result 3 Final Report Summary:**

Provide support for township and county officials to review and change zoning and ordinances that impeded protection of the open space. Two “conservation design” conferences for officials and the public as well as reviews of the existing ordinances by professionals resulted in positive feedback from the participants. This gradual education helped create sufficient support for Stearns County to pass a land-use ordinance that requires new housing developments in the Avon Hills to permanently preserve at least 80% of the land. This is believed to be the highest standard in the USA.

Stearns County using nationally recognized expert Tom Daniels who was in MN to speak at the Avon Hills conference. He met a day earlier with township and county officials and provided a line-by-line suggestion for their consumption. That review was heavily used by the citizens committee assigned to draft the new land use ordinances in Stearns County. (See result 1) The end result of the ordinance review is that Stearns County has a conservation overlay district that is a national leader in that it seeks to protect 80% of the existing open land.

Avon Township and Collegeville Township both do township level zoning and land use planning as a stricter subset of the county zoning. They also elected to undergo a

review of their existing ordinances in an attempt to assure that the land use provisions best protected open space while providing the option for land development.

The City of St. Joseph also requested a mini-conference of local officials and interested parties to look at the land-use provisions of the new comprehensive plan being created. This draft plan proposed to annex large portions of an adjacent township including portions of the Avon Hills. The city was intentionally using old-fashioned methods of land use planning that result in minimal green space, up-front allocations of high density housing to developers, and little thought about the livability of such housing or even the need for such large swaths of open land to be annexed. While the conference speakers were very good and it was well-attended, few city officials chose to attend and the end result was not especially positive. We had hoped it would have a more definitive effect on the final outcome of the comp plan. But the local leadership was very committed to a traditional approach to comprehensive planning. A city council member commented that a large ship turns slowly, but that this review and the preceding day of conferences had started to turn the ship towards a greener future.

Certainly this LCCMR project resulted in the majority of the targeted lands being directed towards a greener future.

## **V. TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET:**

### **Staff or Contract Services:**

\$113,701 for Arboretum staff members/student employee salary.

(Estimated distribution of staff salaries is: Thomas Kroll .10 FTE @ 3 years = \$29,251; S. Gainey .10 FTE @ 3 years = \$13,480; Avon Hills Land Heritage Coordinator .4 FTE @ 3 years = \$45,000. Environmental Education Fellow .4 FTE @3 yrs = \$25,970.)

\$1,200 for speaker honorariums for conferences, 6 @ \$200 each.

\$20,000 for comprehensive plan and ordinance consulting.

**Equipment:** \$ 0

**Development:** \$ 0

**Restoration:** \$ 0

**Acquisition, including easements:** \$ Negotiation, stewardship and legal fees, etc. = \$198,710 (400 acres; 6 easements); payment to MN Land Trust for easement stewardship.

**Other:** \$ Printing and supplies for outreach and conferences \$2,000; mileage \$530.

**TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET: \$ 337,431**

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

## **VI. OTHER FUNDS & PARTNERS:**

**A. Project Partners:** The MN Land Trust is the largest partner and is financially involved as a contractor and received \$198,710. The Nature Conservancy is an active partner in promoting conservation in the Avon Hills and has recently completed the Conservation Action Plan for the Avon Hills. No funding for The Nature Conservancy is planned at this time, but they could be come involved as a contractor given appropriate circumstances.

**B. Other Funds Proposed to be Spent during the Project Period:** Saint John's and The Nature Conservancy have been actively promoting open space and innovate land use for 5 years. No specific funding is leveraged as part of this grant, but many groups share an interest in positive outcomes and contribute their time and funding based on the activity.

**C. Past Spending:** Saint John's and The Nature Conservancy each committed \$5,000 in cash to launch the Avon Hills Initiative. Saint John's has committed an additional \$5,000 in cash and also spent many hours in in-kind contributions fo staff. The Initiative Foundation of Little Falls has committed \$10,000 to promote the Avon Hills Initiative.

**D. Time:** 3 years ending on June 30, 2011.

**VII. DISSEMINATION:** The Avon Hills website will be the most accessible location for information. <http://www.csbsju.edu/arboretum/avonhills>

**VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:** Periodic work program progress reports were submitted not later than January 2009, August 2009, January 2010, August 2010, and January 2011. This is the final work program report.

**IX. RESEARCH PROJECTS: N/A**

Attachment A: Budget Detail for 2008 Projects - Summary and a Budget page for each partner (if applicable)										30-Jun-11	
Project Title: Preserving the Avon Hills Landscape											
Project Manager Name: Thomas Kroll											
Trust Fund Appropriation: \$ 337,000											
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											
2008 Trust Fund Budget	Result 1 Budget:	Amount Spent (30 Jun 2011)	Adjusted Balance (30 Jun 2011)	Result 2 Budget:	Amount Spent (30 Jun 2011)	Adjusted Balance (30 Jun 2011)	Result 3 Budget:	Amount Spent (30 Jun 2011)	Balance (30 Jun 2011)	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
	<i>Community Outreach and Communication</i>			<i>Complete New Conservation Easements</i>			<i>Local Ordinance Reviews and Field Visits</i>				
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>											
PERSONNEL: wages and benefits (SJ Staff)	30,517	30,517	0	29,360	26,141	3,219			0	59,877	3,219
Contracts			0	0	0	0			0	0	0
Professional/technical (honorariums)			0	140	140	0	18,800	17,221	1,579	18,940	1,579
Minnesota Land Trust			0	32,500	28,804	3,696				32,500	3,696
Honorariums	9,073	9,073	0	0	0	0			0	9,073	0
Other direct operating costs (for what? - be specific)			0	0	0	0			0	0	0
Equipment / Tools (what equipment? Give a general description and cost)			0	0	0	0			0	0	0
Office equipment & computers - NOT ALLOWED unless unique to the project			0	0	0	0			0	0	0
Other Capital equipment (list specific items)			0	0	0	0			0	0	0
Land acquisition			0	0	0	0			0	0	0
Land rights acquisition (easements - Minnesota Land Trust)			0	128,000	106,968	21,032			0	128,000	21,032
Professional Services for Acq.			0	0	0	0			0	0	0
Printing	8,070	8,070	0	0	0	0	1,200	1,138	62	9,270	62
Other Supplies (folders, mailings)	11,950	11,950	0	0	0	0			0	11,950	0
Travel expenses in Minnesota	1,390	1,390	0	0	0	0			0	1,390	0
Travel outside Minnesota (where?)			0	0	0	0			0	0	0
Construction (for what?)			0	0	0	0			0	0	0
Other land improvement (for what?)			0	0	0	0			0	0	0
Other (Easement Stewardship - funds dedicated to perpetually monitoring, managing, and enforcing acquired easements on an estimated 450-1,000 acres. - Minnesota Land Trust)			0	66,000	63,000	3,000			0	66,000	3,000
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$61,000</b>	<b>\$61,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$256,000</b>	<b>\$225,053</b>	<b>\$30,947</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$18,359</b>	<b>\$1,641</b>	<b>\$337,000</b>	<b>\$32,588</b>
<p>The Result 1 Adjusted Budget accurately reflects expenditures for Result 1 and includes a small shifting of funds between budget items within Result 1. All expenses were incurred to achieve deliverables in Result 1. Shifting funds between personnel and other expenses covers the difference between the budget and actual expenses without exceeding the Result 1 total budget.</p> <p>The Result 2 Adjusted Budget reflects the changes approved to allow more funding for easement acquisition and less funding for staff personnel time and MLT staff time. This allowed additional acres to be covered by easements.</p>											

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# Preserving the Avon Hills Landscape

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## COMPLETED PROJECT SUMMARIES

### Avon Hills (1)

This 34-acre property contains relatively natural and undisturbed habitats of upland forest, wetland, grassland and a pond that support a variety of species in greatest conservation need. Surrounded by undeveloped hills, wetlands, and ponds, the property provides habitat to such animal species as the indigo bunting, scarlet tanager, mink, muskrat, and a variety of songbirds, amphibians, and waterfowl. Warbler species migrate through the property seasonally. As part of a wetland complex feeding into Watab Creek, this land helps preserve water quality. This easement was donated by private landowners and prohibits industrial, commercial and agricultural uses. The easement also prohibits division of the property and residential use is limited.

### Avon Hills (2)

This 11-acre property contains relatively natural and undisturbed habitats of upland forest and wetlands that support a variety of wildlife species. This property lies adjacent to the first Avon Hills conservation easement, and contributes to the overall health of the wetland complex feeding into the Watab Creek. This easement was completed by a private company and prohibits industrial, commercial, residential and agricultural uses. The easement further prohibits division of the property.

### St. Wendel Tamarack Bog (1)

This 41-acre property consists primarily of hardwood forest and wetlands fed by natural springs, as well as some small areas of wildlife food plots and grassland. The property also contains a pond, and two small perennial streams, which have a combined total of 775 feet of shoreline. The high-quality hardwood swamp and tamarack swamp on the property have both been mapped by the Minnesota County Biological Survey and are part of a larger wetland complex that connects with the adjacent St. Wendel Tamarack Bog SNA. This easement was donated by private landowners and prohibits industrial, commercial, residential and agricultural uses. The easement further prohibits division of the property.

### St. Wendel Tamarack Bog (2)

This 56-acre property consists primarily of forest and wetlands with natural springs, and some patches of grassland. The property also contains two ponds, perennial streams, and shoreline along Swamp Lake, totaling of 3,697 feet of shoreline. The high-quality native plant communities of spring fen, black ash seepage swamp, graminoid rich fen, willow-dogwood shrub swamp, and tamarack swamp have been mapped by the Minnesota County Biological Survey and are part of a larger wetland complex that connects with the adjacent St. Wendel Tamarack Bog SNA. The property provides habitat for a variety of species in greatest conservation need, including trumpeter swans, common snapping turtles and red-shouldered hawks, which have all been seen on the property by the landowners. This easement was purchased from private landowners for a price below fair-market value and prohibits industrial use, commercial use and division of the property, and limits residential and agricultural uses.

### Sand Lake

This 43-acre property has large, rolling hills that consist mostly of mixed hardwood forest, woodland, and grassland with scattered trees. The dominant trees include bur and white oak, green ash, birch and ironwood. There are three small ponds with numerous wetlands on the property that contribute to the ecological integrity of Sand Lake. The property also includes 4,793 feet of shoreline along the north side of Sand Lake, a natural environment lake by the Minnesota DNR, as well as a key habitat for species in conservation need as identified by Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy due to its shallow depth. This easement was purchased from private landowners for a price below fair-market value. This conservation easement prohibits industrial, commercial, residential and agricultural uses, and also prohibits division of the property.

### Stumpf Lake

This 215-acre property consists of a rolling terrain with mixed hardwood forest, wetlands, 15-acres of planted pines, and about 35 acres of CRP native grasses. The property contains shoreline on Pfleuger Lake and Watab Creek, which connects Pfleuger Lake and Stumpf Lake. The maple-basswood forest and mixed hardwood swamp located on the west side of the property have been identified as sites of biodiversity significance by the Minnesota County Biological Survey, and are also key habitats for species in greatest conservation need according to Minnesota's State Action Plan. The existing farmstead has been designated a Century Farm by the Minnesota Farm Bureau and the Minnesota State Fair. This easement was donated by a private landowner and prohibits industrial and agricultural uses. The easement also prohibits division of the property and residential use is limited.

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Protecting the Avon Hills Landscape – 2008  
 Summary of Purchased and Donated Easements

**PURCHASED EASEMENTS**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Funding Type</b>	<b>Funds Use</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>
Sand Lake Stearns County	43	ENRTF – 2008 Avon Hills	Purchase price of conservation easement	\$163,000
		Landowner donation	Donated value of conservation easement	\$13,620
		ENRTF – 2008 Avon Hills	Stewardship	\$15,000
St. Wendel Tamarack Bog Stearns County	56	ENRTF – 2008 Avon Hills	Purchase price of conservation easement	\$19,000
		Landowner donation	Donated value of conservation easement	\$5,000
		ENRTF-2009 Land Trust allocation	Stewardship	\$12,000

**DONATED EASEMENTS**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Funding Type</b>	<b>Funds Use</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>
Avon Hills Stearns County	34	ENRTF – 2008 Avon Hills	Stewardship	\$6,000
		Landowner donation	Stewardship	\$9,000
		Landowner donation	Donated value of conservation easement	Unknown
Avon Hills Stearns County	11	ENRTF – 2008 Avon Hills	Stewardship	<i>Included with the stewardship for the other Avon Hills project</i>

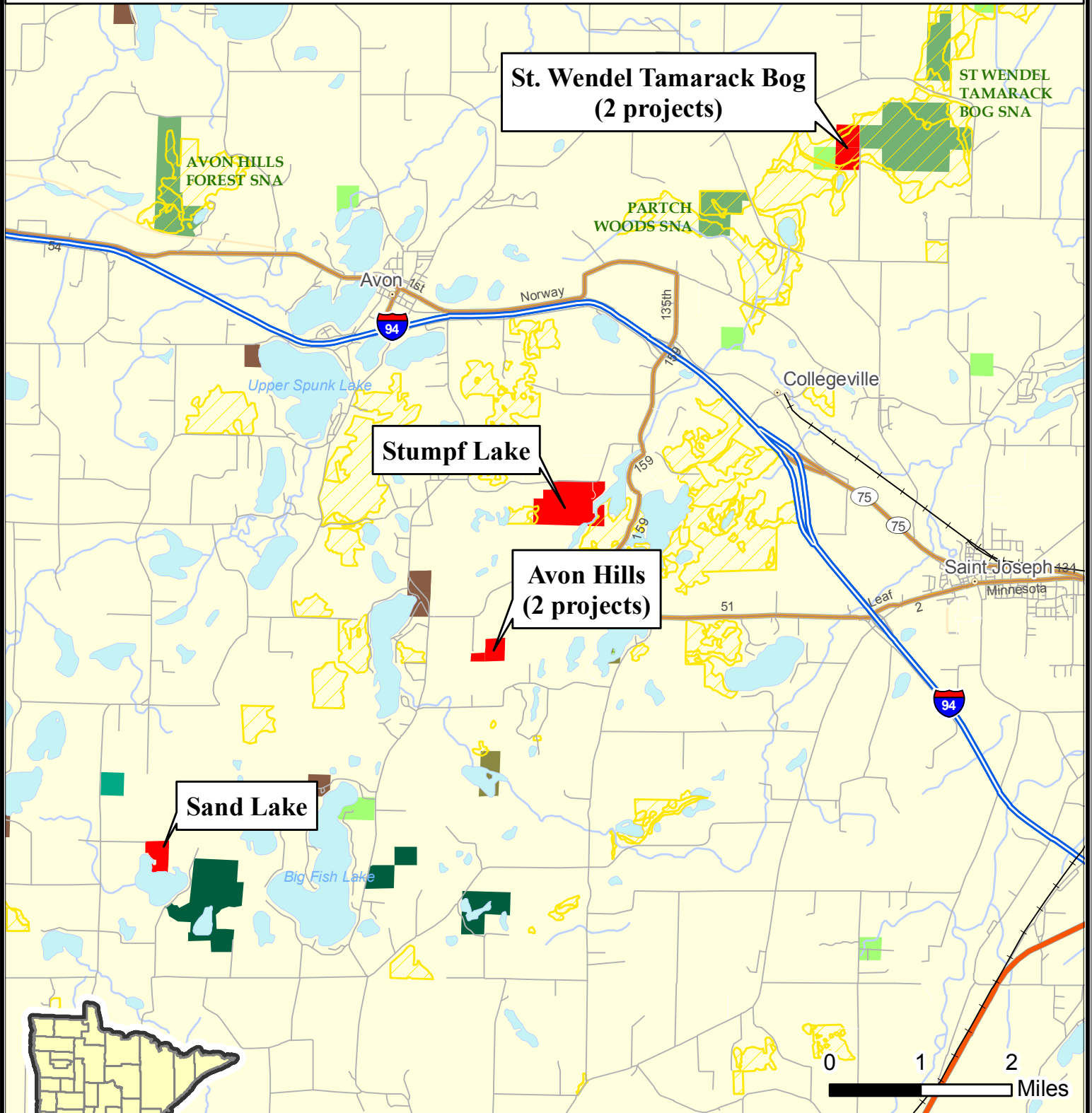
		Landowner donation	Donated value of conservation easement	Unknown
St. Wendel Tamarack Bog	41	ENRTF – 2008 Avon Hills	Stewardship	\$15,000
Stearns County				
		Landowner donation	Donated value of conservation easement	Unknown
Stumpf Lake	215	ENRTF – 2008 Avon Hills	Stewardship	\$15,000
Stearns County				
		Landowner donation	Donated value of conservation easement	Unknown









In addition to the expenses listed above, staff time and professional services expenses covering closing costs, title review, etc. were incurred and covered by the ENRTF Avon Hills funding. The Land Trust does not allocate staff time or professional services expenses to specific conservation projects.

# Preserving the Avon Hills Landscape

LCCMR 2008 GRANT

Completed Conservation Easement Projects



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Completed Projects            |  Waterfowl Production Areas    |
|  DNR Trails & Waterways Land   |  Other State Owned Land        |
|  DNR Wildlife Management Areas |  Federally Owned Land          |
|  DNR Scientific & Natural Area |  MCBS native plant communities |

 **Saint John's**  
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