

2009 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2011

PROJECT TITLE: *Critical Lands Protection Program, The Trust for Public Land*

Minnesota's Habitat Conservation Partnership Phase VI www.mnhabitatcorridors.org

PROJECT MANAGER: Robert McGillivray

AFFILIATION: The Trust for Public Land

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FUNDING SOURCE: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

LEGAL CITATION: M.L. 2009, Chapter 143, Section 2, Subdivision 4(e)

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$350,000

Overall Project Outcome and Results

On September 30, 2011, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) acquired 510 acres in Le Sueur County containing high-quality wetlands and 1.64 miles of naturally flowing Cannon River just upstream from a concentration of rare freshwater mussels. Of the 510 acres, 104 acres were acquired with \$350,000 from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) and the other 406 acres with \$1,369,493 in other state funds. TPL immediately conveyed the property to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) who will manage the land as a new Wildlife Management Area ("Dora Lake WMA"). In addition to conserving a large area of Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS) identified native habitat, acquisition of these tracts provides an opportunity to restore approximately 200 acres of tilled land in a sensitive water quality area. The DNR will restore them to wetlands, grassland and eventual guided succession to Big Woods. Protection of the property ensures habitat for fish, game and wildlife in the Cannon River watershed.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

Accomplishment Reports and press releases about the overall Habitat Conservation Partnership are available at <http://www.mnhabitatcorridors.org>. Information about this acquisition and the Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex effort will be posted on TPL's website: www.tpl.org. Information about the Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex effort has also been disseminated through its network of supporters which include: the Cannon River Watershed Partnership, the Tri-Lake Sports Club, the Dark House Anglers Southern Chapter, Minnesota Deer Hunters Association South Central Prairieland Bucks Chapter (Le Sueur, Rice, Waseca, and Steele Counties), Waterville Sportsman's Club, Montgomery Sportsmen's Club, Minnesota Waterfowl Association Scott- LeSueur Chapter, the Izaak Walton League Owatonna Chapter, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2009 Work Program Final Report**

Date of Report: January 23, 2012
Date of Next Progress Report: Final Report
Date of Work Program Approval: June 25, 2009
Project Completion Date: June 30, 2011

I. PROJECT TITLE: *Critical Lands Protection Program, The Trust for Public Land*
Minnesota's Habitat Conservation Partnership Phase VI www.mnhabitatcorridors.org

Project Manager: Robert McGillivray
Affiliation: The Trust for Public Land
Mailing Address: 2610 University Ave, #300
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Web Site Address: www.tpl.org

Location: All Habitat Conservation Partnership work will be completed within the Project Area boundaries identified in the attached map.

Total Trust Fund Project Budget:	Trust Fund Appropriation	\$350,000
	Minus Amount Spent:	<u>\$350,000</u>
	Equal Balance:	\$ 0

Legal Citation: M.L. 2009, Chapter 143, Section 2, Subdivision 4(e)

Appropriation Language:

(e) Minnesota's Habitat Conservation Partnership (HCP) – Phase VI
\$3,375,000 is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for the sixth appropriation for acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements. Of this appropriation, \$770,000 is for the Department of Natural Resources agency programs and \$2,605,000 is for agreements as follows: \$450,000 with Pheasants Forever; \$50,000 with Minnesota Deer Hunters Association; \$895,000 with Ducks Unlimited, Inc.; \$85,000 with National Wild Turkey Federation; \$365,000 with the Nature Conservancy; \$210,000 with Minnesota Land Trust; \$350,000 with the Trust for Public Land; \$100,000 with Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.; \$50,000 with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; and \$50,000 with Friends of Detroit Lakes Watershed Management District to plan, restore, and acquire fragmented landscape corridors that connect areas of quality habitat to sustain fish, wildlife, and plants. The United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service is a cooperating partner in the appropriation. Expenditures are limited to the project corridor 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. 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 as an outdoor recreation unit under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.07. The commissioner may similarly designate any lands acquired in less than fee title. A list of proposed restorations and 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 funding for monitoring and enforcing the agreement. To the maximum extent practical, consistent with contractual easement or fee acquisition obligations, the recipients shall utilize staff resources to identify future projects and shall maximize the implementation of biodiverse, quality restoration projects in the project proposal into the first half of the 2010 fiscal year.

II. and III. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY:

On September 30, 2011, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) acquired 510 acres in Le Sueur County containing high-quality wetlands and 1.64 miles of naturally flowing Cannon River just upstream from a concentration of rare freshwater mussels. Of the 510 acres, 104 acres were acquired with \$350,000 from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) and the other 406 acres with \$1,369,493 in other state funds. TPL immediately conveyed the property to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) who will manage the land as a new Wildlife Management Area ("Dora Lake WMA"). In addition to conserving a large area of Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS) identified native habitat, acquisition of these tracts provides an opportunity to restore approximately 200 acres of tilled land in a sensitive water quality area. The DNR will restore them to wetlands, grassland and eventual guided succession to Big Woods. Protection of the property ensures habitat for fish, game and wildlife in the Cannon River watershed.

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

Result 1: Acquisition

Description: TPL may work in any one of the designated HCP project areas. Currently projects are underway in Cass, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Kandiyohi, Le Sueur, Olmsted, Otter Tail, Rice, and Wabasha Counties involving shoreline, wetlands, grasslands and woodlands. TPL will focus on habitat linkage projects that have the following characteristics: large, difficult and/or complex; multiple owners and multiple funding sources; proximity to regional growth centers; and/or, high risk of development. Priority will be given to lands with high quality natural resources, especially shoreland and other lands that provide natural buffers to water resources. The Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan will be used to help identify such lands. Final acreage protection will ultimately be affected by landowner willingness to sell key parcels. Because TPL is focusing on lands buffering water resources, the per acre cost is higher than that of non-riparian land.

Summary Budget Information for Result 1: Trust Fund Budget: \$350,000
Amount Spent: \$350,000
Balance: 0

Deliverable	Completion Date	Budget
1. Acquire approximately 50 acres of habitat in designated project areas. See attached potential project list.	June 30, 2011	\$350,000

Final Report Summary:

Overview: Of the various projects on TPL’s potential project list, TPL used its 2009 ENRTF funding to acquire the Dora Lake WMA in the Cannon River Headwaters Complex. The Lester Lake SNA/AMA and Dead Lake WMA/AMA properties were successfully acquired and transferred to the State using other funding. Work on the other projects originally listed continues.

The Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex: The Dora Lake WMA ~510 acre acquisition is part of the Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex (CRHHC) program, focusing on protection of high-quality wetland, forest, lake, and Cannon River shoreline habitat for fish, game and wildlife in the Cannon River watershed located within Rice and LeSueur Counties. Protection of this large complex will provide opportunities for public hunting, fishing and wildlife conservation.

The Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex effort addresses the following problems: degradation and loss of quality and diversity of habitat in the prairie section of the State; degradation of water quality in the Cannon River Watershed; and lack of available public lands for hunting and angling opportunities, especially within an hour’s drive for over half of the state’s population.

This conservation effort is part of a multi-year effort that includes acquisition, protection, and restoration of core parcels of land that will contribute to a large complex of restored prairies, grasslands, wetlands, lakeshore, and river shoreline.

Protection and restoration of CRHHC parcels will provide critical habitat for game species, including migratory waterfowl (mallards, canvasback, wood ducks, hooded mergansers, pintails, lesser scaup), upland birds (dove, turkey, pheasant, and woodcock) white tail deer, and fish (northern pike, black crappies, bluegills, bullheads and walleye). Protection will also provide access for a diversity of recreational experiences including duck, pheasant, turkey and deer hunting as well as river, stream, and lake fishing. Non-game wildlife, including Species in Greatest Conservation Need, likely to benefit from this protection and restoration work includes Bald Eagle, Bell’s Vireo, Cerulean Warbler, Loggerhead Shrike, Sandhill Crane, Red-headed Woodpecker, Greater Yellowlegs, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Blanding’s Turtle, Mudpuppies, and the Giant Floater, a species of freshwater mussel.

Protecting and restoring vegetative cover within basins and the riparian areas of the lakes, rivers, and streams in this focus area will also help protect water quality by reducing surface water runoff and by providing ecological services such as infiltration through natural buffers to our waterways. All wildlife—and humans—will benefit from improved water quality.

The Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex effort is highly supported by the Cannon River Watershed Partnership, the Tri-Lake Sports Club, the Dark House Anglers Southern Chapter, Minnesota Deer Hunters Association South Central Prairieland Bucks Chapter (Le Sueur, Rice, Waseca, and Steele Counties), Waterville Sportsman’s Club, Montgomery Sportsmen’s Club, Minnesota Waterfowl Association Scott- LeSueur Chapter, the Izaak Walton League Owatonna Chapter, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The Dora Lake WMA Acquisition: This is a large (510-acre) upland-wetland complex with a mosaic of native plant types. It is near the Velishek, Diamond Lake, and the proposed LeTamaraque WMAs and the Delehanty Waterfowl Production Area (WPA). The parcel contains Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS)- identified native habitat including a portion of remnant Big Woods, some southern-most occurrence of tamarack swamp in the state, and 1.64 miles of naturally flowing Cannon River, directly upstream from a concentration of rare freshwater mussels. The Cannon is a large river basin that along with its associated uplands accomplishes Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan (MSCPP) habitat goals #1,2,5, and 7 by maintaining & enhancing water quality of a vital river. These tracts also provide an opportunity to retire approximately 200 acres of tilled land in a sensitive water quality area and restore them to wetlands, grassland and eventual guided succession to Big Woods.

This initial acquisition was prioritized because of its capacity to provide a large wetland/upland complex, the presence of MCBS identified features of the property, the presence of the Cannon River flowing through the property, and its location near existing protected areas. Landowner willingness to sell and the threat of development were also taken into consideration. Restoration work will focus on the degraded portions of the lands acquired and will include conversion of agricultural fields near the wetlands and river into native habitat.

TPL acquired the property on September 30, 2011 and immediately conveyed it to the DNR. Details of the funding for this acquisition are given below.

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	PERCENT	ALLOCATED ACRES
OHF 2011- Cannon River Headwaters (TPL) \$	1,369,493.00	71.33	363.77
ENRTF 2009- HCP (TPL) \$	350,000.00	18.23	92.97
Izaak Walton League (private) \$	507.00	0.03	0.13
ENRTF 2010- HCP (TPL) \$	200,000.00	10.42	53.13
Purchase Price & Appraised Value \$	1,920,000.00	100.00	510.00

V. TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET:

Personnel: NA

Contracts: NA

Equipment/Tools/Supplies: NA

Acquisition, including easements: \$ 350,000

Travel: NA

Other: NA

TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET: \$350,000

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

VI. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners: We are part of the Habitat Conservation Partnership Phase VI proposal. Please see main proposal for complete partner list. The Trust for Public Land will transfer land to the DNR or another appropriate public or nonprofit entity for long-term stewardship.

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy: TPL believes that the success of conservation in Minnesota will depend on effective partnerships amongst nonprofit organizations and with public agencies. Through these public/private partnerships, greater conservation can be achieved with each partner bringing their own particular strengths to bear on the critical issues of protection, restoration, and long term stewardship and management. We believe that working within the Habitat Conservation Partnership allows us to better conserve, restore, enhance and manage habitat for the purpose of sustaining fish, wildlife and native plant communities for all generations. We seek to do this with an emphasis on high quality natural resource lands buffering water resources that will provide outstanding access to nature for the public.

C. Other Funds Proposed to be Spent during the Project Period: The \$350,000 in other funds may come from a variety of sources including federal (LWCF, forest legacy, ACUB, NAWCA, transportation), local (dedication, bonds or other), and private dollars (donations including land value donation).

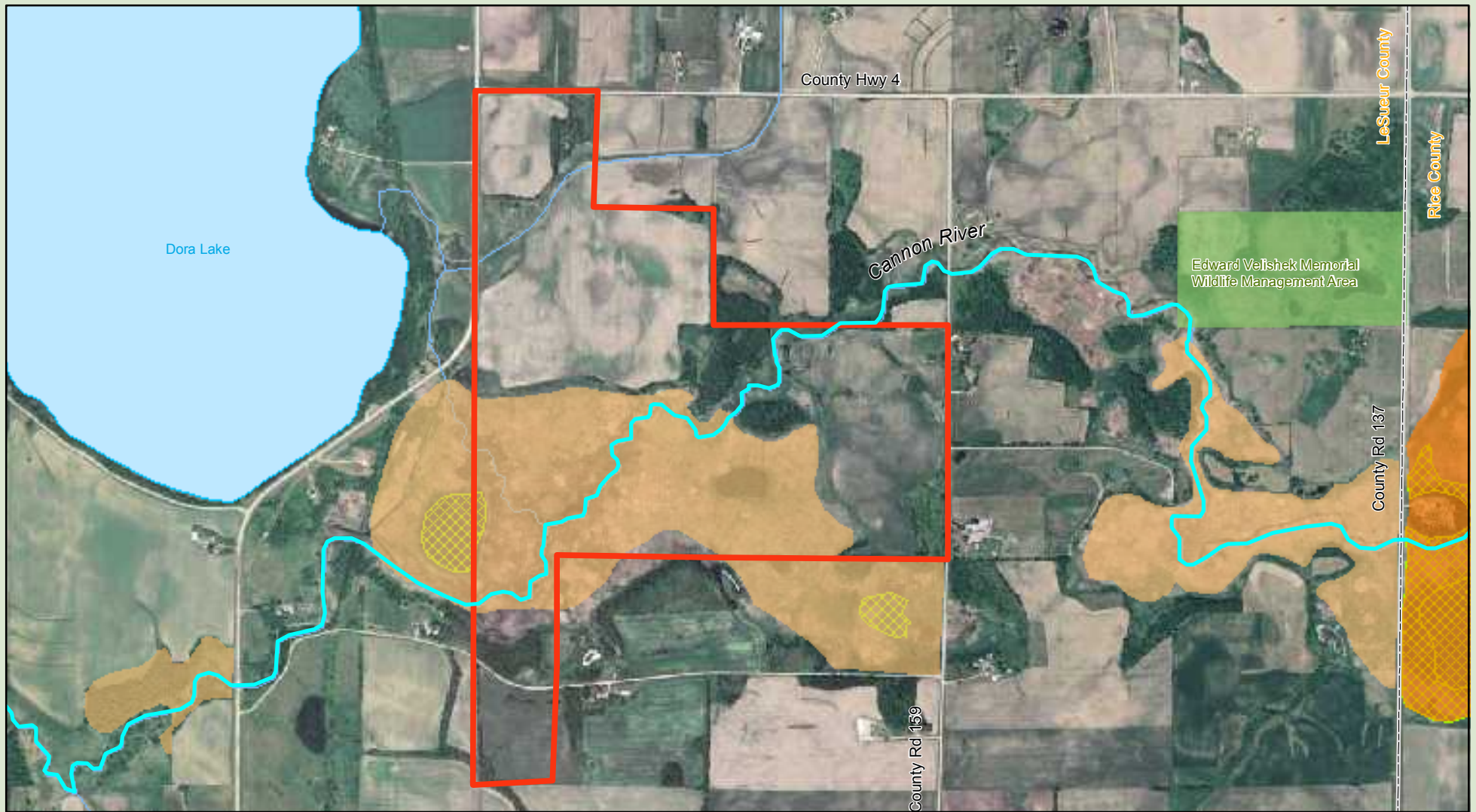
D. Spending History: ENTF Spending: 2001: \$900,000; 2003: \$328,030; 2005: \$425,000; 2007: \$480,000. **Other Funds Spending:** 2001: \$371,000; 2003: \$202,000; 2005: \$677,270; 2007: \$0 "Other Funds," (but \$355,000 in other state funds, \$190,000 in partner ENTF funds and \$175,000 in RIM leveraged land value donations).

VII. DISSEMINATION: Accomplishment Reports and press releases will be made available at <http://www.mnhabitatcorridors.org>

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: Periodic work program progress reports will be submitted not later than December 1, 2009. A final work program report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 1, 2011 as requested by the LCCMR. All reports will be generated using the HCP online reporting system.

IX. RESEARCH PROJECTS: NA

Attachment A: Final Budget Detail for 2009 Project			
Project Title: TPL's Critical Lands Protection Program			
Minnesota's Habitat Conservation Partnership (VI)			
Project Manager Name: Robert McGillivray			
Trust Fund Appropriation: \$ 350,000			
2009 Trust Fund Budget	<u>Result 1 Budget:</u>	Amount Spent	Balance
		9-30-11	30-11
	<i>Acquisition</i>		
BUDGET ITEM			0
Land acquisition	350,000	350,000	0
COLUMN TOTAL	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$0



PROPOSED DORA LAKE WMA (TRACTS I & 2) LESUEUR COUNTY, MINNESOTA

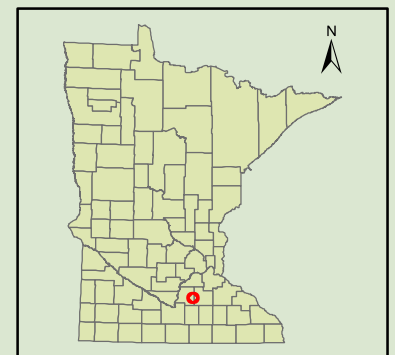
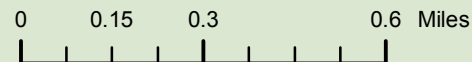
Legend

- Cannon River
- MN Sites of Biodiversity Significance**
- Outstanding
- High
- Moderate
- Below
- County Boundary
- County Boundary
- Natural Plant Communities**
- Natural Plant Communities



Map created by The Trust for Public Land
on 12/23/ 2010

**Information on this map is provided for purposes of
discussion and visualization only.**



Habitat Conservation Partnership Proposed Phase VI Project Areas

-Restoring Minnesota's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Corridors-

