

2009 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2011

PROJECT TITLE: Habitat Acquisition for Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District of USFWS – 4(h), Minnesota’s Habitat Conservation Partnership Phase VI

PROJECT MANAGER: Deborah Loon

AFFILIATION: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.

MAILING ADDRESS: 2312 Seabury Avenue

CITY/STATE/ZIP: Minneapolis, MN 55406

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WEBSITE: www.mnvalleytrust.org

FUNDING SOURCE: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

LEGAL CITATION: M.L. 2009, Chp. 143, Sec. 2, Subd. 4e4h

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$100,000

Overall Project Outcome and Results

The Minnesota Valley Trust acquired 78.5 acres of priority lands in Lincoln Township of Blue Earth County to expand the Lincoln Waterfowl Production Area for the Minnesota Valley Refuge and Wetland Management District, US Fish and Wildlife Service. Of the 78.5 acres, 21 acres were acquired with Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund; the other 56.5 acres were acquired with nonprofit / other, non-state funds.

This acquisition expands upon prior acquisitions for the Lincoln WPA that were funded in part by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund in HCP Phases III and V, as recommended by the LCCMR. This and another acquisition completed concurrently by the Trust bring the total acreage of the Lincoln WPA to approximately 720 acres.

All parcels acquired to create the Lincoln Waterfowl Production Area, including this one, were identified by the US Fish and Wildlife Service as a high priority within an established USFWS Focus Area. Acquisition and restoration will complete USFWS objectives in the area for a host of waterfowl species.

After wetland and upland restoration on the lands is completed, the lands will be donated to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for perpetual management as part of the Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District. They will be managed for wildlife and wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, wildlife interpretation and environmental education.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

The Minnesota Valley Trust will publicize the completion of this project through its website and news releases. All funding partners will be acknowledged on Refuge kiosks, including the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, as recommended by the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources.

Trust Fund 2009 Work Program

Date of Report: August 1, 2011

Final Report

Date of Work Program Approval: June 16, 2009

Project Completion Date: July 26, 2011

I. PROJECT TITLE: Habitat Acquisition for Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District of USFWS – 4(h), Minnesota’s Habitat Conservation Partnership Phase VI

Project Manager: Deborah Loon

Affiliation: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.

Mailing Address: 2312 Seabury Avenue

City / State / Zip: Minneapolis, MN 55406

Telephone Number: 612-801-1935

E-mail Address: DebLoon@comcast.net

FAX Number: 612-728-0700

Web Site Address: www.mnvalleytrust.org

Location: Southeast Region, Blue Earth County

Total Trust Fund Project Budget:	Trust Fund Appropriation	\$ 100,000
	Minus Amount Spent:	\$ 100,000
	Equal Balance:	\$ 0

Legal Citation: M.L. 2009, Chp. 143, Sec. 2, Subd. 4e4h

Appropriation Language:

\$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: The Minnesota Valley Trust acquired 78.5 acres of priority lands in Lincoln Township of Blue Earth County to expand the Lincoln Waterfowl Production Area for the Minnesota Valley Refuge and Wetland Management District, US Fish and Wildlife Service. Of the 78.5 acres, 21 acres were acquired with Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund; the other 56.5 acres were acquired with nonprofit / other, non-state funds.

This acquisition expands upon prior acquisitions for the Lincoln WPA that were funded in part by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund in HCP Phases III and V, as recommended by the LCCMR. This and another acquisition completed concurrently by the Trust bring the total acreage of the Lincoln WPA to approximately 720 acres.

This area boasted tremendous waterfowl production due to a high density of wetlands and prairie habitat prior to the advent of farming and aggressive tiling and drainage practices. The acquisition and restoration of these 720 acres of significant habitat will benefit a host of waterfowl species, including mallard, blue-winged teal, lesser scaup, northern pintail, redhead, wood duck, and canvasback, as well as more than 16 other species of waterfowl.

Major wetland and upland restoration is underway on the Lincoln WPA. Most of the funding is provided by the North American Wetland Conservation Act, with additional funding from MN Pheasants – Blue Earth County, USFWS and the Trust.

After restoration is complete, the lands will be donated to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for perpetual management as a Waterfowl Production Area by the Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District. The land will be managed for wildlife and wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, wildlife interpretation and environmental education.

Appraised value of \$373,000 was paid for the 78.5 acres. Transaction costs paid by with other non-state funds were \$400 legal, \$1,400 appraisal, and \$1,455 for closing costs, title insurance and recording fees.

Funds for the acquisition came from two sources:

- 1) Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund -- \$100,000
- 2) MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. -- \$276,255

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

Result 1: Fee title acquisition

Description: The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. will acquire at least 20 acres of priority wetland and grassland habitat in HCP focus area 10 (Southern MN Lakes). The Trust will acquire at least an additional 20 acres, using Trust and other non-state funds, in the same area. Lands will be donated by the Trust, to be managed and owned by the US Fish & Wildlife Service as a Waterfowl Production Area.

The Trust is working with landowners in focus area 10 and may complete one of the following (or other) acquisitions with the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund grant:

- Acquisition of land to expand the Perch Lake Waterfowl Production Area in Beauford Township of Blue Earth County. Perch Lake is an important migratory waterfowl resting lake and a DNR designated shallow lake. This 480 acre lake hosts more than 10,000 migrating waterfowl each year and is designated as an important resting area for Lesser Scaup. The Trust earlier acquired other parcels to establish the Perch Lake WPA, in part with ETF funds through HCP Phases III and IV.
- Acquisition of land to expand the Lincoln WPA in Lincoln Township of Blue Earth County. Historically, the area boasted tremendous waterfowl production due to a high density of wetlands and prairie habitat. The Trust earlier acquired parcels to begin this WPA, in part with ETF funds through HCP Phases III and V.
- Acquisition of a parcel to expand the existing Evans Slough Complex in Ceresco Township of Blue Earth County. This will allow the Trust and USFWS to come one step closer to protecting and restoring a 200 + acre wetland basin that was drained forty years ago for agricultural purposes. The basin is significant for migration and breeding for a host of waterfowl and other prairie pothole species.

After acquisition and restoration of the habitat by the Minnesota Valley Trust, USFWS and other partners, the lands will be donated to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for management as part of the Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District.

Summary Budget Information for Result 1:	Trust Fund Budget:	\$ 100,000
	Amount Spent:	\$ 100,000
	Balance:	\$ 0

Deliverable	Completion Date	Budget
1. Acquire 20 acres in fee title with ETF funds and 20 acres in fee title with other non-state funds	June 30, 2011	\$ 100,000

Result Completion Date: July 26, 2011

Final Report Summary: The Minnesota Valley Trust acquired 78.5 acres of priority lands in Lincoln Township of Blue Earth County to expand the Lincoln Waterfowl Production Area for the Minnesota Valley Refuge and Wetland Management District, US Fish and Wildlife Service. Of the 78.5 acres, 21 acres were acquired with Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund; the other 56.5 acres were acquired with nonprofit / other, non-state funds.

This acquisition expands upon prior acquisitions for the Lincoln WPA that were funded in part by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund in HCP Phases III and V, as recommended by the LCCMR. This and another acquisition completed concurrently by the Trust bring the total acreage of the Lincoln WPA to approximately 720 acres.

All parcels acquired to create the Lincoln Waterfowl Production Area, including this one, were identified by the US Fish and Wildlife Service as a high priority within an established USFWS Focus Area. Acquisition and restoration will complete USFWS objectives in the area for a host of waterfowl species.

To complete this acquisition, the Minnesota Valley Trust did outreach to landowners within the prospective areas identified for expansion Waterfowl Production Areas. After landowners express interest in potentially selling their land, the Trust obtains an appraisal and makes an offer to acquire fee title at the appraised value. The appraisal is shared with the landowner and the landowner is notified that there is no obligation to sell to the Minnesota Valley Trust. After negotiations are complete, a purchase agreement is signed and the due diligence on the title commences.

After wetland and upland restoration on the lands is completed, the lands will be donated to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for perpetual management as part of the Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District. They will be managed for wildlife and wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, wildlife interpretation and environmental education.

V. TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET:

Personnel: \$ 0

Contracts: \$ 0

Equipment/Tools/Supplies: \$ 0

Acquisition, including easements: \$ 100,000

Travel: \$ 0

Other: \$ 0

TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET: \$ 100,000

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

VI. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners: US Fish & Wildlife Service, Friends of the Minnesota Valley, local soil and water conservation district, local watershed district, local conservation clubs.

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy: This project will benefit a host of waterfowl species, including mallard, blue-winged teal, lesser scaup, northern pintail, redhead, wood duck, and canvasback. All species are Priority Species listed by the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture, NAWCA, MN DNR Long Range Duck Recovery Plan, and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. In addition, this area is host to more than 16 other species of waterfowl that will benefit from this project.

Acquisition and restoration of critical habitat are critical components and primary strategies of the Long Range Recovery Plan. This project will help to: 1) restore the breeding population objective of ducks; 2) restore the migration objectives for ducks in the Mississippi Flyway; and 3) fulfill the recreational objectives for waterfowl hunters and observers.

This particular project area is part of a larger strategy involving many other established projects and efforts -- NAWCA grants of more than \$25 million and more than 50 partners, USFWS Challenge Grants, EPA grants, CREP, numerous local grant programs and more than 20 local sportsman clubs active in the area. USFWS and partners have acquired more than 2,000 acres of habitat in the area to date and are restoring another 50 wetlands and 500 upland acres through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

C. Other Funds Proposed to be Spent during the Project Period: \$100,000

D. Spending History:

Phase II (2003) - \$98,000 ETF and \$741,700 other non-state funds

Phase III (2005) - \$126,878 ETF and \$1,688,649 other non-state funds

Phase IV (2007) - \$100,000 ETF and \$232,976 other non-state funds

Phase V (2008) - \$50,000 ETF and \$80,196 other non-state funds.

VII. DISSEMINATION: As projects are completed, the Minnesota Valley Trust will announce the accomplishments through press releases, the Trust website and the Habitat Conservation Partners website.

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: Periodic work program progress reports will be submitted not later than May 30 and November 30. A final work program report

and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 1, 2011 as requested by the LCCMR.

IX. RESEARCH PROJECTS: NA

Attachment A: Budget Detail for 2009 Projects					
Project Title: Habitat Acquisition for Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District of USFWS – 4(h), Minnesota’s Habitat Conservation Partnership Phase VI					
Project Manager Name: Deborah Loon					
Trust Fund Appropriation: \$100,000					
2009 Trust Fund Budget	<u>Result 1 Budget:</u>	Amount Spent	Balance (date)	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
	Fee title acquisition of 20 acres		8.1.11		
BUDGET ITEM					
Land acquisition	100,000	100,000	0	100,000	0
COLUMN TOTAL	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000	\$0



