

2009 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2011

PROJECT TITLE: Metro Conservation Corridors Phase V –
Mapping and Coordination

PROJECT MANAGER:	Bart Richardson (mapping)	Sarah Strommen (coordination)
AFFILIATION:	Minnesota DNR	Minnesota Land Trust
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FUNDING SOURCE: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

LEGAL CITATION: M.L. 2009, Chap. 143, Sec. 2, Subd. 4(f) 1.1

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$100,000

Overall Project Outcome and Results

The Metro Conservation Corridors (MeCC) Partnership completed its fifth phase of work to accelerate protection and restoration of remaining high-quality natural lands in the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area. Work was accomplished by strategically coordinating and focusing conservation efforts within a connected network of critical lands that stretches from the area's urban core to its rural perimeter, including portions of 16 counties.

Projects and activities took place within science-based corridors and were guided by the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, as well as numerous local and resource-specific plans. This project addressed several recommendations of the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan:

- Protect priority land habitats
- Protect critical shorelands of streams and lakes
- Restore land, wetlands, and wetland-associated watersheds
- Improve connectivity and access to outdoor recreation

The Mapping and Coordination element of the MeCC Partnership provided coordination and leadership for the partnership by Minnesota Land Trust staff and improved prioritization through enhanced database development and mapping of the corridors by DNR staff.

During this phase of work, the coordination activity included regular meetings of the partners to share information and accomplishments, assisting partners with preparation of reports, compiling overall partnership results, and assisting DNR staff with the mapping, database development, and results tracking. The mapping activity included successful development and refinement of a GIS-based database to track historic and current MeCC projects. The database allows partners to generate tables and reports for status and accomplishment reporting for a variety of MeCC components – from project types, to funding sources, to activities, to partnerships, to location analysis. It also links to an interactive web map where the public can see the locations of completed projects.

Although we had originally hoped to complete a mini-evaluation of the MeCC Partnership, due to the time involved in mapping and compiling historic project data, there was not time to complete the evaluation.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

The Metro Conservation Corridors Partnership primarily distributed information through individual partners as projects were completed. Partners publicized accomplishments through press releases and organization newsletters and websites. Additionally, the Partnership now has a public web map where the public can view MeCC projects. This web map can be accessed at: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/maps/MeCC/mapper.html>.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund 2009 Work Program Final Report

Date of Report: August 9, 2011

Final Report

Date of Work Program Approval: June 16, 2009

Project Completion Date: June 30, 2011

I. PROJECT TITLE: Metro Conservation Corridors Phase V –
Mapping and Coordination

Mapping Project Manager: Bart Richardson
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Coordination Project Manager: Sarah Strommen
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Web Site Address: www.mnland.org

Location: 16 county metro area consisting of Wright, Hennepin, Dakota, Carver, Scott, Washington, Ramsey, Anoka, Chisago, Isanti, Goodhue and Sherburne.

Total Trust Fund Project Budget:	Trust Fund Appropriation	\$100,000
	<i>MLT Total</i>	<i>\$50,000</i>
	<i>DNR Total</i>	<i>\$50,000</i>
	Minus Amount Spent:	\$50,924
	<i>MLT Amount Spent:</i>	<i>\$12,304</i>
	<i>DNR Amount Spent:</i>	<i>\$38,620</i>
	Equal Balance:	\$49,076

Legal Citation: ML 2009, Chap. 143, Sec. 2, Subd. 4(f)1.1

Appropriation Language: \$3,375,000 is from then trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for the fifth appropriation for the acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements. Of this appropriation, \$2,185,000 is for the Department of Natural Resources agency programs and \$1,190,000 is for agreements as follows: \$380,000 with the Trust for Public Land; \$90,000 with

Friends of the Mississippi; \$155,000 with Great River greening; \$250,000 with Minnesota Land Trust; \$225,000 with Minnesota Valley National Wildlife refuge Trust, Inc.; and \$90,000 with Friends of the Minnesota Valley for the purposes of planning, restoring and protecting important natural areas in the metropolitan area, as defined under Minnesota Statutes, section 473.121, subdivision 2, and portions of the surrounding counties, through grants, contracted services, technical assistance, conservation easements, and fee title acquisition. Land acquired with this appropriation must be sufficiently improved to meet at least minimum management standards as determined by the commissioner of natural resources. Expenditures are limited to the identified project corridor areas as defined 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 easements 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 title 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 Metro Conservation Corridors (MeCC) Partnership completed its fifth phase of work to accelerate protection and restoration of remaining high-quality natural lands in the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area. Work was accomplished by strategically coordinating and focusing conservation efforts within a connected network of critical lands that stretches from the area's urban core to its rural perimeter, including portions of 16 counties.

Projects and activities took place within science-based corridors and were guided by the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, as well as numerous local and resource-specific plans. This project addressed several recommendations of the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan:

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The Mapping and Coordination element of the MeCC Partnership provided coordination and leadership for the partnership by Minnesota Land Trust staff and improved prioritization through enhanced database development and mapping of the corridors by DNR staff.

During this phase of work, the coordination activity included regular meetings of the partners to share information and accomplishments, assisting partners with preparation of reports, compiling overall partnership results, and assisting DNR staff with the mapping, database development, and results tracking. The mapping activity included successful development and refinement of a GIS-based database to track historic and current MeCC projects. The database allows partners to generate tables and reports for status and accomplishment reporting for a variety of MeCC components – from project types, to funding sources, to activities, to partnerships, to location analysis. It also links to an interactive web map where the public can see the locations of completed projects.

Although we had originally hoped to complete a mini-evaluation of the MeCC Partnership, due to the time involved in mapping and compiling historic project data, there was not time to complete the evaluation.

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

Result 1: Partnership and Program Coordination

Description: For this phase of the MeCC grant, the partnership agreed that DNR would subcontract with the Minnesota Land Trust to provide partnership and program leadership and coordination.

Coordination of the partnership specifically included:

- 1) Convene and facilitate meetings of the partnership (estimated at 4 per year) and the executive committee (estimated at 4 per year)
- 2) Provide support to partners in preparing work programs and reports
- 3) Compile overall work programs, status reports and final reports
- 4) Coordinate the identification of focus areas where the partners will direct their restoration and protection efforts
- 5) Work with DNR staff on Result 2: Corridor Data Base Development, Project Tracking, and Mapping to ensure coordination with other partnership activities
- 6) Coordinate outreach efforts to local communities and other potential partners
- 7) Assist with public relations promoting the accomplishments of the partnership, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and LCCMR, as appropriate
- 8) Provide information to LCCMR as needed or requested

The Land Trust focused efforts on the 2009 MeCC grant but also assisted with closing out the 2007 and 2008 phases in order to create consistency and a smooth transition between phases of this program.

Summary Budget Information for Result 1: Trust Fund Budget: \$ 50,000
Amount Spent: \$ 12,304
Balance: \$ 37,696

Deliverable	Completion Date	Estimated Budget
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1. Convene and facilitate partnership meetings	6-30-2011	
2. Provide support to partners	6-30-2011	
3. Compile overall work programs	6-30-2011	
4. Coordinate the identification of focus areas	6-30-2011	
5. Work with DNR staff on Result 2	6-30-2011	
6. Coordinate outreach efforts	6-30-2011	
7. Assist with public relations	6-30-2011	
8. Provide information to LCCMR	6-30-2011	

Final Report Summary:

The Land Trust staff successfully coordinated the MeCC Partnership by convening and facilitating regular meetings of the partnership, compiling and providing overall work program updates to LCCMR staff, and providing other information as needed to both partners and LCCMR staff. The MeCC Partnership also held its first joint meeting with the Habitat Conservation Partnership.

Land Trust staff also assisted the DNR staff and partners to map past projects and enter historic project data into the new MeCC database, going back to the first appropriation in 2003. Because mapping of specific projects was not done or required to the same level it is today, it was a larger undertaking than originally anticipated.

As is evident in the budget information section, the coordination function only required a little more than half of the funds originally appropriated for this activity. There are two reasons for this outcome. First, when the project proposals and work programs were originally put together, it was anticipated the DNR would provide the coordination function for the partnership as it had in all the previous phases. Therefore, the budget was developed with DNR’s structure in mind – not the Minnesota Land Trust’s. Second, we had originally intended to conduct a mini-evaluation of the partnership and its past accomplishments, which would have involved paying an outside contractor. Unfortunately, we were unable to complete this evaluation due to timing constraints. As noted above, the process of gathering and compiling data from past phases and entering this information into the MeCC database took longer than anticipated. At the point this task was complete and we were ready to move forward with the evaluation, LCCMR staff asked us to not proceed given the shortness of time. It is the hope of the MeCC partners that the evaluation can be completed at some point in the future.

Result 2: Corridor Data Base Development, Project Tracking, and Mapping

Description: This result was carried out by classified staff within the Department Management Information System (MIS) section supported by special projects funds that are cost-coded.

In 2008 the DNR Central Region contracted with the DNR MIS to develop a GIS-based database to track MeCC projects. In 2009 project partners began entering

information into the database and DNR MIS scoped out additional database functions. Version 2 of the database, created under this result, will allow partners to generate tables and reports for status and accomplishment reporting for a variety of MeCC components – from project types, to funding sources, to activities, to partnerships, to location analysis. It also created an improved web map where the public can see the locations of completed projects. Finally, MIS was reimbursed for database server space and application maintenance.

Summary Budget Information for Result 2: **Trust Fund Budget: \$50,000**
Amount Spent: \$38,620
Balance: \$11,380

Deliverable	Completion Date	Budget
1. MeCC Database Version 2 a. Display MeCC projects on a public web map b. Partner tables and project maps c. Historical data entry assistance to partners d. Project administration	August 2009 January 2011 January 2011 March 2011 June 2011	
2. Generate overall tables from the database a. Status report 1 b. Status report 2 c. Status report 3 d. Status report 4 e. Final report	August 2009 Feb. 2010 August 2010 Feb. 2011 July 2011	
3. MeCC Corridor Map a. Draft a protocol for partner adoption b. Manage any edit requests	June 30, 2010	
4. MeCC Database maintenance reimbursement	June 30,2011	

Final Report Summary:

DNR staff completed updates to Version 2 of the MeCC Database. The database is now able to quickly generate tables for reports and to both upload and export shapefile information for individual projects. A database mapping application allows partners to easily map project areas.

Additionally, an interactive public web map is now fully functional and shows the locations of MeCC projects over time. This web map can be accessed at:
<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/maps/MeCC/mapper.html>.

Although we had originally hoped to create a direct interface with LCCMR systems in order to generate the Land Acquisition Reports, it was determined that this was not possible due to differences in the MeCC and LCCMR systems. However, the MeCC database is now able to generate all the information necessary for partners to quickly complete LCCMR land acquisition work program reports.

V. TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET: \$100,000

Personnel: DNR: \$38,620 (includes 0.5 FTE Classified ITS-3 within the Department Management Information System (MIS) section supported by special projects funds that are cost-coded for Result 2.)

Contracts: \$12,304 to Minnesota Land Trust to cover a portion of the salaries and related benefits of staff working on coordination, project-specific conference calls and travel.

TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET: \$100,000

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

VI. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners: Project partners include:

Trust for Public Land	Critical Land Protection Program
MN Land Trust	Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements
Friends of the Mississippi River	Mississippi River Valley Habitat Restoration
Friends of the Minnesota River	Lower Minn. River Watershed Restoration & Enhancement Project
MN Valley Nat. Wild. Refuge Trust	Expansion of MN Valley Nat. Wildlife Refuge
Great River Greening	Restore/Enhance Significant Habitat
DNR Metro Greenways	Metro Greenways
DNR Fish and Wildlife	Acquisition and Restoration
DNR SNA Program	Scientific and Nat. Area Acquisition/Restoration

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy: The Metro Conservation Corridors partnership works to accelerate protection and restoration of key natural lands in the metro area. Coordinating conservation efforts within this regional framework helps to increase the cost-effectiveness of our work by efficiently leveraging private and public partners and resources and building upon prior investments. The mapping function helps the partnership focus on areas with the greatest regional importance for habitat using state-of-the-art natural resource assessments and regional prioritization methods. Finally, development of a Metro Corridors database will allow the partnership to track its results history, assess progress, and identify opportunities to build upon prior protection and restoration work.

C. Other Funds Proposed to be Spent during the Project Period: No other funds were spent on coordination and mapping functions.

D. Spending History: \$24,800 of the 2007 LCCMR Overall Coordination Result 1. \$50,000 was appropriated in 2008 for coordination and mapping efforts through June 30, 2010.

VII. DISSEMINATION: The Metro Conservation Corridors partnership primarily distributed information through individual partners as projects were completed. Partners publicized accomplishments through press releases and organization newsletters and websites. Additionally, as noted above the partnership now has a public web map where the public can view MeCC projects.

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: Periodic work program progress reports were submitted not later than February 1st and August 1st of each year. This is the final work program report.

IX. RESEARCH PROJECTS: N/A

Attachment A: Budget Detail for 2009 Projects								
Project Title: Metro Conservation Corridors Phase V - Mapping and Coordination 1.1								
Project Manager Name: Bart Richardson (Mapping) and Sarah Strommen (Coordination)								
Trust Fund Appropriation: \$100,000								
2009 Trust Fund Budget	<u>Result 1 Budget:</u>	Amount Spent as of June 30, 2011	Balance	<u>Result 2 Budget:</u>	Amount Spent as of June 30, 2011	Balance	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM	Partnership & Program Coord.			Corridor Data Base, Project Tracking				
PERSONNEL: wages and benefits: staff from DNR Central Region for Result 2				50,000	38,620	11,380	50,000	11,380
CONTRACTS: to Minnesota Land Trust to cover a portion of the salaries and related benefits of staff working on coordination (approximately .25 FTE conservation program staff and other support staff), project-specific conference calls and travel.	50,000	12,304	37,696				50,000	37,696
COLUMN TOTAL	\$50,000	\$12,304	\$37,696	\$50,000	\$38,620	\$11,380	\$100,000	\$49,076