

2009 Project Abstract
For the Period Ending June 30, 2011

PROJECT TITLE: Metro Conservation Corridors (MeCC) Phase V –
Restore and Enhance Significant Watershed Habitat
(2.3)

Project Manager: Tom Lewanski
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FUNDING SOURCE: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

LEGAL CITATION: Legal Citation: M.L. 2009, Chp. 143, Sec. 2, Subdivision 4(f)2.3

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$ 90,000

Overall Project Outcome and Results

The Twin Cities contains significant habitat areas. There is a concerted effort to protect, improve and link these areas. FMR's goal with this project was to partner with landowners to restore and enhance habitat at a number of these areas. During this phase of the MeCC project, FMR conducted activities at 9 distinct sites resulting in the restoration of a total of 287 acres, including 179 acres using Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund funds and 108 acres using leveraged funds. A management plan exists for each site, which served as guide for the restoration and enhancement activities. These sites included:

1. **Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area:** Spot treated weeds on a 17-acre restored prairie and conducted exotic brush control on 28 acres of woodland. Conducted follow up buckthorn control on 3-acres of woodland.
2. **Sand Coulee Prairie.** Conducted prescribed burns, mowing, and spot-spraying on 83-acres. Volunteers assisted in collecting seeds and removing weeds.
3. **Rosemount Wildlife Preserve.** Conducted a prescribed burn on 16 acres of woodland.
4. **Wilmar.** Mowed a 25-acre prairie restoration & treated exotic invasive plants in a 15-acre woodland.
5. **Mississippi River Gorge.** Volunteers installed native tree and shrubs on 2-acre and installed prairie plants to enhance a 4-acre prairie restoration within Crosby Park. Volunteers also hand weeded the site. At the Riverside Park in Minneapolis, volunteers installed native plants within 4-acre of woodland.
6. **Hastings Riverflats Park.** Applied basal bark treatment to buckthorn on 27 acres of floodplain forest.
7. **Gores Pool Wildlife Management Area and Aquatic Management Area.** Exotic brush was removed and sprouts treated on 67 acres of woodland. Native grass seed was broadcasted over this woodland. Prairie restoration activities took place on a 4-acre old field. A 4-acre reed canary grassland was treated as part of a re-forestation effort.

8. **Ravenna Block Greenway-Dakota County.** Buckthorn was removed from 12 acres of woodland, while a prescribed burn was conducted and native prairie seed was broadcasted on a 24-acre grassland.
9. **Emrick.** 22 acres of a former farm field were seeded to prairie, followed by a mowing. Nine acres of exotic dominated woodland were removed and chipped for biofuels.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

FMR organizes many tours and stewardship events at the sites where we conduct restoration activities. We share information about this project with the participants of these events. FMR also occasionally publishes articles in its paper and electronic newsletters regarding restoration projects that it is involved in. The following are four examples that highlight some of these projects & ENRTF:

- http://www.fmr.org/news/current/fmr_to_restore_bluffland-2009-08
- http://www.fmr.org/news/current/fmr_wins_sustainability_award-2011-04
- http://www.fmr.org/sites/fmr.org/files/fmr_newsletter_2010-03. Landowner Steps Up To Help The River. Page 3. Restoring a Woodland: One Stem at a Time. Page 5.
- Fall 2010 newsletter (paper copy). Program Updates. Restoration Begins at Minneapolis' Riverside Park. Page 4.

Metro Conservation Corridors (MeCC) Phase V – Restore and Enhance Significant Watershed Habitat (2.3)

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

Date of Report: 8/1/11

M.L. 2009

Date of Work program Approval: June 16, 2009

Project Completion Date: June 30, 2011

I. PROJECT TITLE: Metro Conservation Corridors (MeCC) Phase V –
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Web Page address: www.fmr.org

Location: Within mapped focus area in the counties of Dakota,
Goodhue, Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka, and Washington.

Total Trust Fund Project Budget:	M.L. 2009
Trust Fund Appropriation:	\$90,000
Minus Amount Spent:	\$89,329.21
Equal Balance:	\$670.79

Legal Citation: M.L. 2009, Chp. 143, Sec. 2, Subdivision 4(f)2.3

2009 Appropriation Language:

\$3,375,000 is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for the fifth appropriation for acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements. Of this appropriation, \$2,185,000 is for 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 River; \$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. 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

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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 Twin Cities contains significant habitat areas. There is a concerted effort to protect, improve and link these areas. FMR's goal with this project was to partner with landowners to restore and enhance habitat at a number of these areas. During this phase of the MeCC project, FMR conducted activities at 9 distinct sites resulting in the restoration of a total of 287 acres, including 179 acres using Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund funds and 108 acres using leveraged funds. A management plan exists for each site, which served as guide for the restoration and enhancement activities. These sites included:

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9. **Emrick.** 22 acres of a former farm field were seeded to prairie, followed by a mowing. Nine acres of exotic dominated woodland were removed and chipped for biofuels.

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

Result 1: N/A

Result 2: Restore & Enhance Significant Habitat:
Description:

FMR will work with both public and private landowners to restore and/or enhance 50 acres of significant habitat using MeCC phase V funding. This funding will enable

Metro Conservation Corridors (MeCC) Phase V – Restore and Enhance Significant Watershed Habitat (2.3)

FMR to leverage non-state funding to restore an additional 30 acres of significant habitat.

Specific habitat types that may be restored and/or enhanced include prairie, oak savanna, deciduous forest and/or wetland communities. Techniques that will be employed to restore and enhance these areas will be based on the specific requirements of each project site to be chosen, but may include: soil preparation (spraying, burning, disking, dragging), seed drilling or broadcasting, mowing, prescribed burning, spot spraying, installation of native plants, and removal of invasive plant species. Vendors will complete some of the restoration techniques. Vendor contracts will be awarded on a competitive and performance basis. We will consider contracting with the Minnesota Conservation Corps when appropriate.

Guidelines for project selection will include but will not be limited to: ecological importance of site (based on size, habitat quality, buffering of existing high quality habitat, water quality benefits, & connectivity to other natural areas), matching funds, and partner interest and commitment. Priority will be given to projects on public land and on private land that has been permanently protected through a conservation easement. Prior to the initiation of restoration activities on private land, a landowner agreement will be secured.

Selection of native plants and seeds will follow the LCCMR's guidelines as outlined in the brochure: Native Plant Material-Local vegetation ecotype sequencing. Seed mix selection will be based on the DNR's native plant community field guides.

Ecological management plans will be developed prior to initiation of restoration activities. These management plans contain information regarding existing conditions & issues, goals, activities designed to pursue these goals, preliminary costs associated with the activities, and a timeline.

These restoration and/or enhancement activities will be targeted to: See Exhibit 1 for a list of targeted projects and associated activities.

Summary Budget Information for Result 2:

	M.L. 2009
Trust Fund Budget:	\$90,000
Amount Spent:	\$89,329.21
Balance:	\$670.79

Deliverable	Completion Date	Budget	Status
1. M.L. 2009 - 50 acres restored	6/30/2011	\$90,000	Completed

Metro Conservation Corridors (MeCC) Phase V – Restore and Enhance Significant Watershed Habitat (2.3)

and/or enhanced (<i>partner acres and other funding not counted here</i>)			
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Final Completion Date: M.L. 2009 = 6/30/2011

Result Status as of 8/1/2011

Funding Source	\$ From Work Program	\$ Actual	Acres – From Work Program	Acres - Actual
ENRTF	\$90,000	\$89,329.21	50	242
Non-State Match	\$70,000	\$75,323	30	126
Other funding	-	\$4,078	-	-
Total	\$160,000	\$168,730.21	80	368

During this time period FMR conducted restoration and enhancement activities at numerous sites.

The largest project area was 83-acres at the Sand Coulee prairie. 72 of these acres were enhanced with ENRTF funding and 11 acres enhanced using non-state matching funds. Specific activities included a prescribed burn in both 2010 and 2011 on 20-acre and 27-acre units, respectively. We spot-treated invasive herbaceous weeds on 18 acres. In fall 2010 the DNR seeded an 18-acre cropland to native prairie, which we mowed in June 2011 along with a 4-acre unit that had been seeded the previous year. A grant from the Vermillion JPO funded several volunteer events that accomplished prairie management and enhancement. 36 volunteers collected over 33 lbs of prairie seed, including many species not typically obtained by mechanical seed harvest methods, that was used in the 18-acre restoration. We also had volunteers hand-pulled small patches of invasive weeds that were growing among native plants where herbicide would not be used. A high school class collected seed and installed plants grown from coulee seed as part of a prairie enhancement. Propagation of the plants was donated by a local nursery, The Vagary, located in Hampton MN. MeCC funds covered 39% of the project costs.

ENRTF funds covered 10% of the costs for ecological work at 67 acres of Gores WMA (the former Freitag property). Funds from the National Fish and Wildlife foundation covered the majority of the costs. Tasks accomplished were removal of very dense exotic brush from most of the 67 acres, plus follow-up treatment of resprouts and new growth; prairie restoration activities on a 4-acre old field (herbicide, burn, herbicide, seed, mow, spot-spray weeds); herbicide treatment of a 4-acre reed canary grassland as part of a re-forestation effort; and native seed applied to an oak savanna restoration. The latter was done in order to get adequate fuels to burn the site, which was significantly opened up after buckthorn removal. Fire will help to control buckthorn and stimulate growth of any native prairie seedbank. Total number of acres is 75. 8 acres are assigned to ENRTF funding, while 67 acres are assigned to non-state funding.

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Ravenna Block: MeCC funds covered most of the costs for restoration of an oak woodland at the Almquist property in Ravenna Township – buckthorn was removed from 12 acres. The landowner contributed by cutting and burning numerous boxelder from a grassland that will later be restored to prairie. MeCC also covered most of the costs for a small project to manage a 24-acre grassland at the adjacent Curtis property. The grassland was burned and native seed was broadcast as a method for reducing brome grass and increasing native species. The landowner contributed by broadcasting the native seed. 35 acres were assigned to ENRTF and 1 acre to non-state matching funds.

At Pine Bend Bluffs SNA the following management was conducted on 45 acres using ENRTF funding: spot treatment of weeds on a 17-acre prairie restoration, and exotic brush removal (cut, basal treat and burn slash) on 28 acres. MeCC funded most of that work. FMR funded two volunteer events focused on hand-pulling invasive weeds from a high-quality prairie remnant and oak forest. At the Katharine Ordway Natural History Study Area, within the Pine Bend Bluffs area, we conducted follow up buckthorn control using foliar herbicide spray on 3-acres of woodland.

On-going management of the Wilmar property along the Vermillion River continued with mowing a 25-acre prairie restoration, spot-treating invasive weeds, re-treating exotic brush resprouts as well as girdling/treating exotic invasive trees from the 15-acre adjacent woods. MeCC funded 67% of this work with 33% funded by the Dakota County Farmland and Natural Areas Program (non-state) for prairie mowing. 27 acres were assigned to ENRTF and 13 acres were assigned to non-state matching funds.

At the Emrick property, prairie seed was installed in two former cropland areas, totaling 22 acres. They were frost-seeded in early March 2011, followed by one mowing in June. A few native species were already visible in the first year. A 3-acre woodland dominated by non-native invasive trees was removed in fall 2010 and chipped for biofuels, along with 6 additional acres of brush. The woodchip was brought to District Energy. Non-state funding from the Dakota County Farmland and Natural Areas Program covered 24% of the total project costs and the landowners contributed 10%. 22 acres were assigned to ENRTF funding and 11 acres were assigned to non-state matching funds.

Several projects were completed at the Mississippi River Gorge. At Riverside Park in Mpls. a planting was completed at a 1-acre woodland. At Hidden Falls Park trees and shrubs were installed to prevent erosion in a 1-acre woodland and prairie plants were installed to enhance a 4-acre prairie restoration. Volunteers also hand-pulled invasive weeds at three events at 4-acres Crosby and two events at Riverside. 5-acres were assigned to ENRTF and 5-acres were assigned to non-state matching funds.

At the Hastings River Flats Park, we employed basal bark herbicide treatment to buckthorn on 27-acres of floodplain forest. The City of Hastings, using their own

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financial resources, assisted at this site by cutting and chipping Siberian Elm. 25 acres were assigned to ENRTF funding and 2 acres to non-state funding.

At the Rosemount Wildlife Preserve, a prescribed burn was completed within a 16-acre woodland to address buckthorn resprouts. Prairie Restorations Inc, who has done much of the site work, donated the burn. All 16 acres were assigned to non-state funding.

Note: FMR is seeking a budget revision. We are asking permission to move \$2,843.36 from the Professional/Technical line to the Other Direct Operating Costs line. We have also moved \$98.83 from the Ecologist line to the Business Manager line.

Final Report Summary (June 30, 2011):

V. TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET:

Personnel: \$12,420.00

Contracts: ~~\$77,000.00~~ \$73,740 \$70,897

Equipment/Tools/Supplies:

Acquisition, including easements:

Travel: \$580.00

Other: ~~\$0~~ ~~\$3,260~~ \$6,103

TOTAL 2009 TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET: \$90,000

VI. OTHER FUNDS & PARTNERS/ PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners:

Metro Conservation Corridor partners, Vermillion River Joint Powers Organization (funding partner), The Vagary, Hastings High School, Dakota County, Minneapolis Parks Board, City of St. Paul, City of Hastings, City of Rosemount, community volunteers and private landowners.

B. Other Funds Proposed To Be Spent During The Project Period:

Non-state: \$75,323.

- Private landowners: \$3,536 (partial in-kind).
- FMR Stewards Program (Vermillion River Joint Powers Organization): \$11,000.
- The Vagary: \$1,000 (in-kind).
- Dakota County Farmland and Natural Area Program: \$10,753.
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation: \$34,634.
- Pheasants Forever (through DNR): \$5,355.
- City of Hastings: \$500 (in-kind).
- Prairie Restorations Inc.: \$3,545 (in-kind).

Metro Conservation Corridors (MeCC) Phase V – Restore and Enhance Significant Watershed Habitat (2.3)

- Corporate Grants: \$5,000

Other state:

- DNR: \$4,078 (in-kind).

Total Other Funds: \$79,401.

C. Spending History:

M.L. 2009: Metro Wildlife Corridors I, II, III, IV - \$327,000

D. Time:

M.L. 2009: 2 years. June 16, 2009 – June 30, 2011

E. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:

FMR will conduct restoration activities on 50 acres (utilizing M.L. 2009 Metro Wildlife Corridors funding) of significant habitat. FMR is a place based conservation organization that focuses its conservation work in the south metro area. Our goal is assist both MeCC and other partners in protecting, restoring, and enhancing important wildlife areas in the Twin Cities Metro Area. We practice retail conservation. That is, we reach out to individual private and public landowners in the designated corridors and engage them in the broader goal of developing a system of interconnected habitat corridors in the Metro area and throughout the state. Because FMR is focused in the Twin Cities we can build strong, long-standing relationships with conservation partners and landowners. Our goal is to stay engaged in all of our projects over the long-term to ensure continuity and that the habitat values are maintained and improved over time.

VII. DISSEMINATION:

FMR organizes many tours and stewardship events at the sites where we conduct restoration activities. We share information about this project with the participants of these events. FMR also occasionally publishes articles in its paper and electronic newsletters regarding restoration projects that it is involved in. The following are four examples that highlight some of these projects & ENRTF:

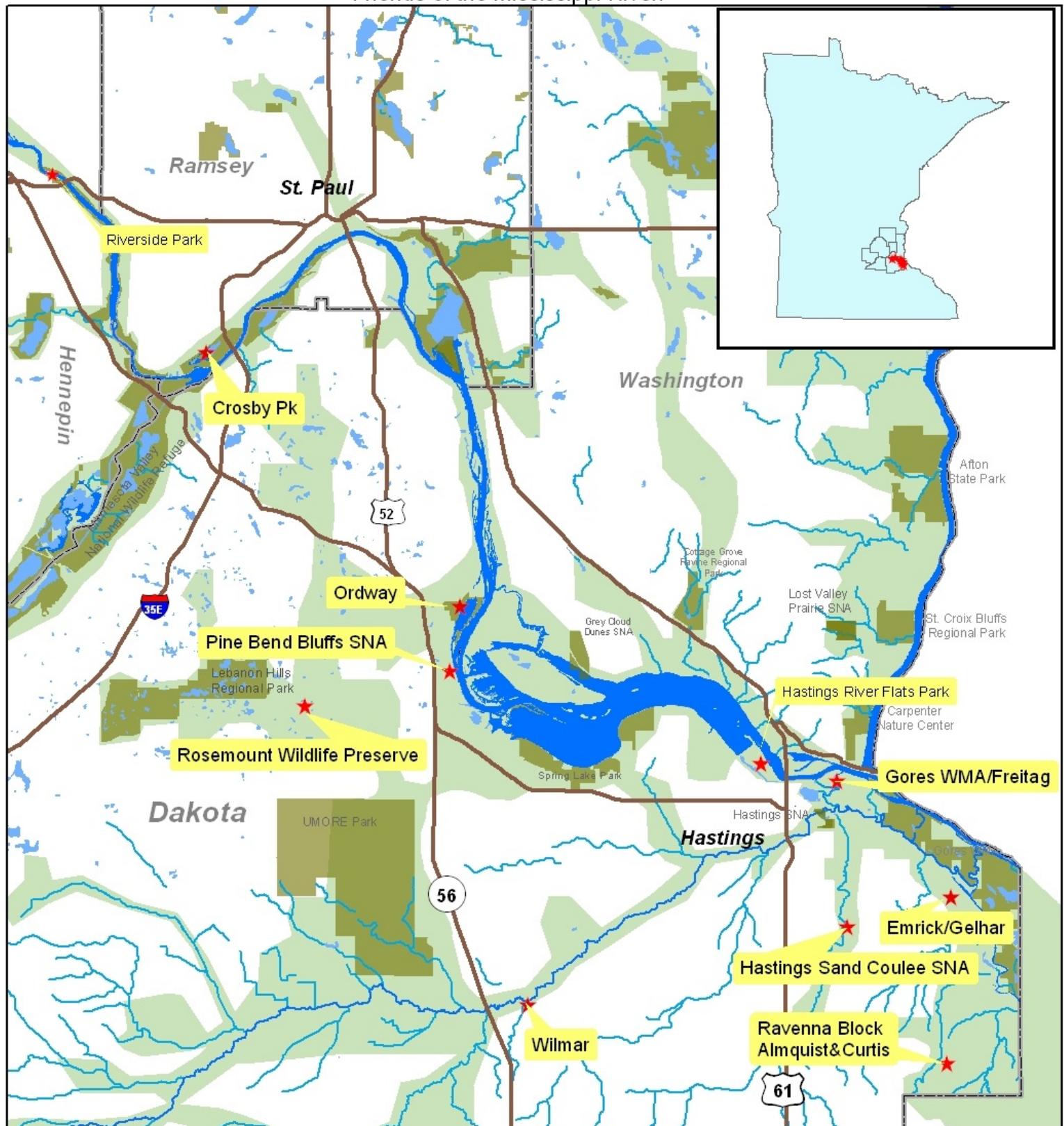
- http://www.fmr.org/news/current/fmr_to_restore_bluffland-2009-08
- http://www.fmr.org/news/current/fmr_wins_sustainability_award-2011-04
- http://www.fmr.org/sites/fmr.org/files/fmr_newsletter_2010-03. Landowner Steps Up To Help The River. Page 3. Restoring a Woodland: One Stem at a Time. Page 5.
- Fall 2010 newsletter (paper copy). Program Updates. Restoration Begins at Minneapolis' Riverside Park. Page 4.

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: Work program progress reports were submitted on February 1, 2010, August 1st 2010, February 1, 2011 with a final report submitted on August 1st, 2011.

Attachment A: Final Budget Detail for 2009 Project								
Project Title: <i>Metro Conservation Corridors (MeCC) Phase V – Restore and Enhance Significant Watershed Habitat (2.3)</i>								
Project Manager Name: <i>Tom Lewanski</i>								
Trust Fund Appropriation: \$ 90,000								
2009 Trust Fund Budget	Result 2 Budget:	Revised Result 2 Budget 2/1/11:	Revised Result 2 Budget 8/1/11:	Amount Spent (8/1/10)	Amount Spent (12/31/10)	Amount Spent (1/1/11 - 6/30/11)	Balance (7/1/11)	
BUDGET ITEM	Restore & Enhance Significant Habitat:		budget revision was requested in final work program report					
PERSONNEL: wages and benefits <i>(List individual names, amount budgeted and %FTE; add rows)</i>								
Conservation Director (2% FTE)	\$2,850.00	\$2,850.00	\$2,850.00	\$0.00	\$1,295.81	\$1,387.88	\$166.31	
Ecologist (2) (6% FTE)	\$8,481.00	\$8,481.00	\$8,382.17	\$0.00	\$2,834.83	\$5,164.28	\$383.06	
Business Manager (.5%)	\$1,089.00	\$1,089.00	\$1,187.83	\$0.00	\$680.97	\$506.86	\$0.00	
Total Personnel	\$12,420.00	\$12,420.00	\$12,420.00	\$0.00	\$4,811.61	\$7,059.02	\$549.37	
Contracts								
Professional/technical. <i>Vendors to provide restoration activities such as burns, soil prep., seeding, woody and exotic plant removal, etc. (Vendor contracts will be awarded on a competitive and performance basis.)</i>	\$77,000	\$73,740	\$70,897	\$3,662	\$33,342	\$33,807	\$86.03	
Travel expenses in Minnesota	\$580	\$580	\$580	\$0	\$253	\$310	\$17.77	
Other direct operating costs <i>(plant material and supplies)</i>	\$0	\$3,260	\$6,103		\$1,018	\$5,067	\$17.62	
COLUMN TOTAL	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$3,662	\$39,424	\$46,243	\$671	

2009-2011 LCCMR Projects
PROJECT TITLE: MeCC5
Restore and Enhance Significant Watershed Habitat

Friends of the Mississippi River.



Parkland, WMA's
Metro Conservation Corridors

1:215,000

0 1 2 4 6 Miles





Almquist: Very dense buckthorn understory before removal 11/17/10



Almquist: Very dense buckthorn understory before removal 3/21/11.



Almquist: Cut, treat, burn buckthorn 3/21/11.



Almquist: Understory much more open after exotic brush removal. 6-13-11.



Gores WMA-Freitag: Prairie resto site preparation – after herbicide. 9/29/10



Gores WMA-Freitag: Prairie resto after burn, ready to seed. 10-11-10



Emrick: East side of wooded 3-ac slope during tree removal. 10-18-10.



Emrick: West side of wooded 3 ac during tree and exotics removal. 10-8-10



Emrick: West slope after exotic tree removal. 4-30-11.



EEmrick: After tree removal. 4-30-11. Trees were used for biofuels.



Emrick: Frost seeding 22 ac to prairie 3/25/11.



Curtis: Rx burn of grassland 4-18-11



Pine Bend SNA: Cut, treat, burn exotic brush from 4 ac, expanding on previous removal area. 3-21-11.



Pine Bend SNA: Volunteers pull garlic mustard in good quality oak forest. 5/12/11.



Wilmar: Additional exotic brush removal work in the woodland. 11-15-10.



Wilmar: First growing season of 25 ac reconstructed prairie. Natives are doing well after 2 mowings. 8/4/10.



Crosby Park: Volunteers remove weeds from prairie installation and plant prairie species. 6/11/11.



Hidden Falls: Volunteers plant shrubs to stabilize ravine slopes and enhance native shrub diversity. 6/18/11.