

2010 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2012

TITLE: Metro Conservation Corridors – Phase V Supplemental Overall Summary
PROJECT MANAGER: Sarah Strommen
ORGANIZATION: Minnesota Land Trust
ADDRESS: 2356 University Avenue West, Suite 240
St. Paul, MN 55114
WEB SITE ADDRESS: www.dnr.state.mn.us/metroconservationcorridors
FUND: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
LEGAL CITATION: Minnesota Laws 2010, Chapter 362, Section 2, Subdivision 4(g)

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$1,750,000

OVERALL PROJECT OUTCOME AND RESULTS

During this supplemental grant to the fifth phase of the Metro Corridors project, the Metro Conservation Corridors Partners continued their work to accelerate protection and restoration of remaining high-quality natural lands in the greater Twin Cities Metropolitan Area by strategically coordinating and focusing conservation efforts within a connected and scientifically-identified network of critical lands. This corridor network stretches from the area's urban core to its rural perimeter, including portions of 16 counties.

This supplemental phase was focused on unique opportunities that were not funded through prior phases of the MeCC program. This supplemental phase included only four of the MeCC partners and accomplished work in two specific result areas.

1. Restore and Enhance Significant Habitat: Partners restored and enhanced a total of 133 acres of significant habitat in the Lower Minnesota River Watershed using Phase V Supplemental funding plus an additional 33 acres with other funds.

2. Acquire Significant Habitat: Partners protected 494 acres of land through acquisition of fee title and conservation easements and leveraged an additional 454 acres of land using other funds.

Since 2003, MeCC partners have protected more than 10,000 acres and restored nearly 8,000 acres. These strategic and coordinated efforts address a number of recommendations of the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, including, protecting priority land habitats, protecting critical shorelands of streams and lakes, restoring land, wetlands, and wetland-associated watersheds, and improving connectivity and access to outdoor recreation.

PROJECT RESULTS USE AND DISSEMINATION

As projects were completed, the individual partners were encouraged to publicize accomplishments through press releases, organization newsletters and websites. These efforts resulted in information being distributed to the public through websites, email lists, daily and weekly newspapers, newsletters, and other print materials. Additionally, the MeCC Partnership maintains an interactive public web map that 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>.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust 2010 Work Program Final Report

Date of Report: September 2012

ENRTF 2010 Final Report

Date of Work program Approval: June 9, 2010

Project Completion Date: June 30, 2012

I. PROJECT TITLE: Metro Conservation Corridors Phase IV Supplemental Overall Summary

Project Manager: Sarah Strommen
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Location: Within mapped corridors (see attached map) in the counties of Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Goodhue, Hennepin, Isanti, LeSueur, Nicollet, Ramsey, Rice, Scott, Sherburne, Sibley, Washington and Wright.

Total Trust Fund Project Budget:	Trust Fund Appropriation:	\$ 1,750,000
	Minus Amount Spent:	<u>\$ 1,647,711</u>
	Equal Balance:	\$ 102,289

Legal Citation: M.L. 2010, Chapter 362, Section 2, Subdivision 4(g)

Appropriation Language:

\$1,750,000 is added to Laws 2009, chapter 143, section 2, subdivision 4, paragraph (f), from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements. Of this appropriation, \$1,750,000 is for agreements as follows: \$890,000 with the Trust for Public Land; \$485,000 with Minnesota Land Trust; \$325,000 with Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.; and \$50,000 with Friends of the Minnesota Valley for 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 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.

II. and III. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY:

During this supplemental grant to the fifth phase of the Metro Corridors project, the Metro Conservation Corridors Partners continued their work to accelerate protection and restoration of remaining high-quality natural lands in the greater Twin Cities Metropolitan Area by strategically coordinating and focusing conservation efforts within a connected and scientifically-identified network of critical lands. This corridor network stretches from the area's urban core to its rural perimeter, including portions of 16 counties.

This supplemental phase was focused on unique opportunities that were not funded through prior phases of the MeCC program. This supplemental phase included only four of the MeCC partners and accomplished work in two specific result areas.

1. Restore and Enhance Significant Habitat: Partners restored and enhanced a total of 133 acres of significant habitat in the Lower Minnesota River Watershed using Phase V Supplemental funding plus an additional 33 acres with other funds.

2. Acquire Significant Habitat: Partners protected 494 acres of land through acquisition of fee title and conservation easements and leveraged an additional 454 acres of land using other funds.

Since 2003, MeCC partners have protected more than 10,000 acres and restored nearly 8,000 acres. These strategic and coordinated efforts address a number of recommendations of the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, including, protecting priority land habitats, protecting critical shorelands of streams and lakes, restoring land, wetlands, and wetland-associated watersheds, and improving connectivity and access to outdoor recreation.

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

RESULT 2: Restore and Enhance Significant Habitat

Description: One MeCC partner restored and/or enhanced 133 acres of significant biological communities and wildlife habitat within the MeCC mapped corridors of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed. All restoration and enhancement work is permanently protected and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Restoration and management plans were developed prior to restoration work. An additional 23 acres were restored/enhanced using other non-state funds. For further detail, please see Friends of the Minnesota Valley's individual work program.

Summary Budget Information for Result 2: ENRTF Budget: \$ 50,000
Amount Spent: \$ 17,491
Balance: \$ 32,509

Deliverable	Completion Date	Budget
1. Restored/Enhanced 133 acres	6/30/2012	\$17,491

Result Completion Date: 6/30/2012.

Final Report Summary: One partner organization restored approximately 133 acres of significant biological communities and wildlife habitat with Phase V supplemental funding, as well as an additional 23 acres through other non-state funds.

A summary of the sub-result is provided below. For additional information and details on projects and expenditures, please see Tables A and B and the individual final report.

2.2: Lower Minnesota Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Project – Friends of the Minnesota Valley

Within the focus area, Friends of the Minnesota Valley (FMV) was able to successfully restore and enhance 30 acres of native wet prairie, 74 acres of native dry sand-gravel oak savanna, and 29 acres of native dry sand-gravel prairie with LCCMR funds during MeCC Phase V Supplement for a total acreage of 133 acres. FMV also restored an additional match acreage of 14 acres of native dry sand-gravel oak savanna and 9 acres of native dry sand-gravel prairie with non-LCCMR, non-state funds.

All work was completed on four Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Units and included cutting and herbicide treatment of non-native woody brush species such as buckthorn, honeysuckle, prickly ash, eastern red cedar, and Siberian elm. Ecological restoration and management plans were developed prior to restoration work, with the underlying goal to restore a self-sustaining ecosystem.

Due to late and persistent flooding, access to the 84-acre marsh project in the Louisville Swamp Unit was prohibited and, as a result, FMV shifted its focus to upland restoration, as described in its amended work program. This shift accounts for FMV's inability to spend the entirety of the 2010 LCCMR-approved appropriation.

RESULT 3: Acquire Significant Habitat

Description: Three MeCC partners protected 494 acres of critical habitat or major landscape connections within the scientifically determined MeCC mapped corridors through the acquisition of fee title land and conservation easements. Work focused

on high-priority, urgent opportunities that supplement and enhance the work done under prior phases of this grant. An additional 454 acres were protected using other, non-state funds. For further detail, please see individual work programs for Minnesota Land Trust, Trust for Public Land, and Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Inc.

Summary Budget Information for Result 3:

ENRTF Budget:	\$ 1,700,000
Amount Spent:	\$ 1,630,220
Balance:	\$ 69,780

Deliverable	Completion Date	Budget
1. Protected 494 acres of significant habitat	6/30/2012	\$1,630,220

Result Completion Date: 6/30/2012.

Final Report Summary: Three partner organizations acquired fee title or conservation easements on 5 sites, protecting a total of 494 acres. Acquisition of an additional 454 acres was completed using other funds.

A summary of each sub-result is provided below. For additional information and details on projects and expenditures, please see Tables A and B and the individual final reports.

3.1: Critical Land Protection Program fee title & conservation easement acquisition-The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) successfully secured fee title on 50.2 ENRTF acres of 407 total acquired acres. TPL then conveyed these lands to public agencies for permanent protection. Individual project successes include:

- TPL spent \$552,000 2010 ENRTF funds to protect 10.8 ENRTF acres of land as part of a larger 69-acre purchase of a high biodiversity corridor including forest, bluffland, wetland and rare calcareous fen. TPL conveyed the land to the Department of Natural Resources as the Savage Fen SNA on the Credit River addition.
- TPL spent \$338,000 2010 ENRTF to protect 39.4 ENRTF acres of land as part of a 338-acre acquisition of one of the largest undeveloped and contiguous tracts of open space in the Twin Cities Metro Area. TPL then conveyed the land to Anoka County. Located at the confluence of Cedar Creek and the Rum River, this land will be managed by the County as the Cedar Creek Conservation Area.

3.2: Protecting significant habitat by acquiring conservation easements – Minnesota Land Trust

The Minnesota Land Trust completed two perpetual conservation easements with 2010 ENRTF funding that collectively protect 374 acres of land and more than 700

feet of shoreline. One easement was purchased at a bargain price, and one easement was donated.

The Land Trust also purchased two additional easements that used both 2009 and 2010 ENRTF funding. Because the accomplishment for these two projects were reported as part of the 2009 report, the projects are described in their individual report but acreage for these two projects are not counted in the 2010 reports to avoid double-counting.

All four projects represent unique opportunities to protect high quality natural habitat, riparian areas, and to build upon prior land protection work by the Land Trust at several priority sites:

- Scandia: 294-acre property, Washington County
- Emmans Farm: 80-acre property, Anoka County
- Deer Lake: 45 acre property, Anoka County*
- Camp Kingswood: 44-acre property, Hennepin County*

The total value for the two easements acquired with ENRTF 2010 funds is \$1,242,000. The donated value is \$1,162,000. Therefore, the Land Trust was able to leverage significant private donation with the State's investment in these projects.

**As noted above, acreage accomplishments for these two projects are only counted as part of the 2009 ENRTF grant.*

3.3: Fee Acquisition for the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge – Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.

The Minnesota Valley Trust acquired 103 acres of priority lands in Scott County to expand the St. Lawrence Unit of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Of the 103 acres acquired, 70 acres were acquired with Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and 33 acres were acquired with other private, non-state funds. Actual grant acres is less than projected grant acres (93) due to higher land values than were anticipated at the time the work program was written.

An additional 63.71 acres were acquired from two other landowners using other private, non-state funds as match of the ENRTF grant. Those acquisitions expand the Jessenland Unit of the Minnesota Valley Refuge in Sibley County. The total leverage to this project was 96.71 acres acquired using other non-state funds.

All acquisition acres are within the expansion boundaries for the Refuge as identified through a public planning process by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and documented in the Refuge's "Comprehensive Conservation Plan." After any needed restoration and enhancement, the lands will be donated to the USFWS for perpetual management as part of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. They will be managed for wildlife and open to the public for wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, wildlife interpretation and environmental education.

V. TOTAL ENRTF PROJECT BUDGET: \$1,647,711

Please see also the attached Table B.

Personnel: \$ 27,005

Contracts: \$ 9,415

Equipment/Tools/Supplies: \$ 3,076

Acquisition Including Permanent Easements: 1,598,215

Easement Stewardship: \$ 10,000

TOTAL ENRTF PROJECT BUDGET: \$ 1,647,711

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

VI. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners: Partners included in this supplemental phase include Trust for Public Land, Minnesota Land Trust, Friends of the Minnesota Valley, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust Inc. We also closely coordinated with the other MeCC and non-MeCC partners including DNR SNA, Anoka County, USFWS, and private landowners.

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy: This project advanced the long-term strategy of the Metro Conservation Corridors, launched in partnership with the LCCMR in 2003 to accelerate the protection and restoration of critical habitat in the greater Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. This 16 county area is in the midst of expansion and development that causes habitat loss and fragmentation and permanently converts high quality natural areas to urban uses.

The work of the MeCC partnership is targeted within *science-based corridors* and is 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 the following 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

Additionally, this project addressed our state's need to:

- Protect and enhance critical habitat for a vast variety wildlife and rare plant species, including "Species in Greatest Conservation Need."
- Strengthen our community's resilience to climate change.

C. Other Funds Spent during the Project Period: Partners leveraged \$2,614,820 in other non-state funds. Partners also spent \$4,420,500 of other state funds on acquisition and restoration activities during the project period.

D. Spending History:

Phase I (2003) - \$4,850,000 ETF
Phase II (2005) - \$3,530,000 ETF
Phase III (2007) - \$2,500,000 ETF
Phase IV (2008) - \$3,150,000 ETF
Phase V (2009) - \$3,375,000 ETF

VII. DISSEMINATION: As projects were completed, the individual partners were encouraged to publicize accomplishments through press releases, organization newsletters and websites. These efforts resulted in information being distributed to the public through websites, email lists, daily and weekly newspapers, newsletters, and other print materials. Additionally, the MeCC Partnership maintains an interactive public web map that 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>.

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: Periodic work program progress reports were February 1 and August 1 of each year, starting in February 2011. This is the final work program report.

IX. RESEARCH PROJECTS: NA

Metro Conservation Corridors 2010 - Phase V Supplemental

Table A: Summary of Funding & Accomplishments
Final Report

LCCMR Appropriated Dollars: \$1,750,000

Result/Activity	Partner	ENRTF 2009 Funds			Other Funds		Total Project Funds Spent (ENRTF, Other State Funds & Non-State Funds combined)	ENRTF	Other Funds	Total Project Acres Completed (ENRTF & Other Funds combined)
		ENRTF 2010 Funds Allocated	ENRTF 2010 Funds Spent	ENRTF 2010 Funds Balance	Other State Funds Spent	Other Non-State Funds Spent		ENRTF 2010 Acres Completed	Other Funds Acres Completed	
2. Restore & Enhancement Significant Habitat										
2.4. Lower Minnesota River Watershed Restoration & Enhancement Project	Friends of MN Valley	\$ 50,000	\$ 17,491	\$ 32,509		\$ 31,174	\$ 48,665	133	23	156
SUBTOTAL		\$ 50,000	\$ 17,491	\$ 32,509	\$ -	\$ 31,174	\$ 48,665	133.0	23.0	156
3. Acquire Significant Habitat										
3.1 Critical Lands Protection Program	The Trust for Public Land	\$ 890,000	\$ 890,000	\$ -	\$ 4,410,000	\$ 1,090,000	\$ 6,390,000	50	357	407
3.2. Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements	Minnesota Land Trust	\$ 485,000	\$ 415,220	\$ 69,780	\$ 10,500	\$ 1,169,500	\$ 1,595,220	374		374
3.3. Expansion of MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	MN Valley NWR Trust, Inc.	\$ 325,000	\$ 325,000	\$ -		\$ 324,146	\$ 649,146	70	97	167
SUBTOTAL		\$ 1,700,000	\$ 1,630,220	\$ 69,780	\$ 4,420,500	\$ 2,583,646	\$ 8,634,366	494	454	948
TOTAL		\$ 1,750,000	\$ 1,647,711	\$ 102,289	\$ 4,420,500	\$ 2,614,820	\$ 8,683,031	627	477	1104

Metro Conservation Corridors 2010 Phase V Supplemental Table B: Budget Detail

Activity	Partners	LCCMR Funding						Budget Explanation (staff/contract services, development, equipment, other)
		Personnel	Contracts	Supplies	Acquisition	Other	TOTAL	
2. Restore & Enhance Significant Habitat								
2.4. Lower Minnesota River Watershed Restoration & Enhancement Project.	Friends of MinnesotaValley	\$ 5,000	\$ 9,415	\$ 3,076			\$ 17,491	Staff: 0.16 FTE; Contracts:earthwork contractors to install water control structures, build earthen dams, break drainage tile lines, field prep, seed installation, invasive species removal, etc.; Supplies: native seed and trees, water control structures, herbicide, etc. 50 acres restored.
SUBTOTAL		\$ 5,000	\$ 9,415	\$ 3,076	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 17,491	
3. Acquire Significant Habitat								
3.1 Critical Lands Protection Program	The Trust for Public Land				\$ 890,000		\$ 890,000	Fee title land acquisition of 50 acres plus an additional 357 acres with other funds.
3.2. Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements	Minnesota Land Trust	\$ 22,005			\$ 383,215	\$ 10,000	\$ 415,220	Staff: Staff expenses including salaries, benefits and related costs for Conservation directors or other land protection staff and staff attorney and other support staff; Acquisition: includes purchase price of easement(s); title work, title insurance; maps, GIS; appraisals, surveys, recording fees, etc.; Other: \$10,000 for easement stewardship. 374 acres protected.
3.3. Expansion of MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.				\$ 325,000		\$ 325,000	Fee title acquisition of 70 acres plus an additional 97 acres with other funds.
SUBTOTAL		\$ 22,005	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,598,215	\$ 10,000	\$ 1,630,220	
TOTAL		\$ 27,005	\$ 9,415	\$ 3,076	\$ 1,598,215	\$ 10,000	\$ 1,647,711	