



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2011 Work Plan

Date of Status Update: 09/29/2011
Date of Next Status Update: 07/01/2012
Date of Work Plan Approval: 11/17/2011
Project Completion Date: 6/30/2014 **Is this an amendment request?** _____

Project Title: Saint Croix Basin Conservation Planning and Protection

Project Manager: Deb Ryun

Affiliation: St. Croix River Association

Address: PO Box 655

City: St. Croix Falls **State:** MN **Zipcode:** 54024

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Email Address: debryun@scramail.com

Web Address: www.stcroixriverassociation.org

Location:

Counties Impacted: Carlton, Chisago, Kanabec, Pine, Washington

Ecological Section Impacted: Lake Agassiz Aspen Parklands (223N), Minnesota and Northeast Iowa Morainal (222M), North Central Glaciated Plains (251B), Northern Minnesota and Ontario Peatlands (212M), Northern Minnesota Drift and lake Plains (212N), Northern Superior Uplands (212L), Paleozoic Plateau (222L), Red River Valley (251A), Southern Superior Uplands (212J), Western Superior Uplands (212K)

Total ENRTF Project Budget:	ENRTF Appropriation \$:	120,000
	Amount Spent \$:	0
	Balance \$:	120,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2011, First Special Session, Chp. 2, Art.3, Sec. 2, Subd. 03o

Appropriation Language:

\$60,000 the first year and \$60,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the St. Croix River Association to develop an interagency plan to identify and prioritize critical areas for project implementation to improve watershed health. This appropriation must be matched by \$120,000 of nonstate cash or qualifying in-kind funds. Up to \$10,000 may be retained by the Department of Natural Resources at the request of the St. Croix River Association to provide technical and mapping assistance. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2014, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered. NOTE: No funds will be provided to the DNR.

I. PROJECT TITLE: Saint Croix Basin Conservation Planning and Protection

II. PROJECT SUMMARY:

Legal Citation: Appropriation Language for “Saint Croix Basin Conservation Planning and Protection”, \$120,000; \$60,000 the first year and \$60,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the St. Croix River Association to develop an interagency plan to identify and prioritize critical areas for project implementation to improve watershed health. This appropriation must be matched by \$120,000 of nonstate cash or qualifying in-kind funds.

Problem: Portions of the St. Croix River Basin are now on the impaired waters list; rare landscapes, plant and animal communities are threatened by development pressures. Multi-jurisdictional conservation efforts are complex, lack focus and coordination in the St. Croix Basin. If current Basin trends continue, the quality of our own wild and scenic St. Croix River will continue to decline.

Need: A means to stream-line and focus conservation efforts on areas with the most critical need in the Basin is vital for governmental units and citizens to change this course. This includes addressing existing problem areas, preventing new ones, and creating a culture of stewardship in the entire Basin.

Short Project Description: This project links local, state, and federal governmental units, citizen-led non-profits, and design & technical expertise in an effective, well-coordinated partnership to set priorities, implement targeted on-the-ground projects, protect wildlife habitat, and promote land and water stewardship to enhance and protect the very special place the Saint Croix River Basin is to live, recreate, and work. This project will enhance efficiencies and improve environmental outcomes. The project will synchronize with the “Linking Sustainable Forestry with Water Quality in the Upper St. Croix Basin” project to ensure all major land cover types and land uses (e.g. forestry, agriculture, and urban) in the Basin are effectively integrated into prioritized management, protection, and restoration efforts.

Outcomes Activity 1:

- **Master list** of basin conservation strategies that reflects an effective and practical approach to protecting the St. Croix
- **A team committed to implementation** of conservation priorities
- **Prioritization criteria** to guide Activity 2
- **Task and assignments** for efficient and coordinated implementation by all players

Outcomes Activity 2:

- A basin to site **Prioritization Protocol** identifying the best returns for investment
- **8 to 10 Priority Minor Watershed Conservation Areas** identified
- **3 to 5 Subwatershed Assessments** that identify the most cost-effective projects with the highest conservation value
- **30 to 50 Priority Actions**
- Installation of **7 practices on the ground** using ENRTF and matching funds

III. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status updates will be provided in accordance with the schedule below:

- Project Status as of: July 1, 2012
- Project Status as of: January 1, 2013
- Project Status as of: July 1, 2013
- Project Status as of: January 1, 2014
- Final Report Summary: July 1, 2014

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: Craft a collective, far-reaching conservation strategy for the Basin in the project area.

Much work has already been completed in the St. Croix Basin. The St. Croix River Association will collect and distill county water plans, Soil and Water Conservation District comprehensive plans, county water plans, municipal capitol improvement plans, National Park Service plans, DNR regional plan, nonprofit priorities, and others. These players will form the St. Croix Action Team. From all of these plans, **one master list** of priorities will be created.

Building on what we know, the Team will identify strategies needed to prevent and mitigate changes that are likely to degrade land and water resources. Based on these strategies, the Team will develop prioritization matrix to be used in Activity 2 to identify priority actions. The prioritization matrix will develop criteria for multiple landscape types (rural, urban, developing land, forested, agriculture) based on factors such as:

- Environmental Quality: Habitat, Species Diversity, Water Quality
- Economic Impacts: Scenic Value, Tourism/Recreation, Development, Transportation
- Recreational Opportunities
- Implementation Funding from Existing Funding
- Local Support

These criteria will be used to assign task and roles to Team members.

Lead Organization: St. Croix River Association (SCRA)

Partners: Washington Conservation District, Chisago County Soil and Water Conservation District

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$26,000
Amount Spent: \$0
Balance: \$26,000

Activity 1 Completion Date:

Outcome	Completion	ENRTF Budget
1. Formation of St. Croix Action Team	January 2012	1,000
2. Master list of basin conservation strategies that reflects an integrated, effective and practical approach to protecting the St. Croix	July 2012	5,000
3. Prioritization criteria based on existing plans and team input	July 2012	10,000
4. Task and role assignments for efficient and coordinated implementation by all players	September 2012	10,000
		26,000

Project Status as of: July 1, 2012

Project Status as of: January 1, 2013
Project Status as of: July 1, 2013
Project Status as of: January 1, 2014
Final Report Summary: July 1, 2014

ACTIVITY 2: Develop a basin to site prioritization protocol, identify priority conservation areas and the priority actions needed, and implement targeted projects to protect and maintain healthy landscapes and watersheds in the Basin.

This comprehensive, ecosystem approach will integrate water quality, recreation, wildlife, and economic interests and ultimately better leverage the current federal, state, and local resources available to support action on the ground. Furthermore, the multi-scale prioritization protocol will provide critical information for local implementers about where to target education, technical assistance, and incentive programs.

Prioritization Protocol will analyze the landscape at multiple scales: **basin, major watershed, minor watershed, subwatershed and site**. Integrated hydrologic and ecologic analysis will indicate where conservation actions will be targeted to have the greatest cumulative impact to protect, improve or restore systems, including: 1) land and habitat; 2) water quality and hydrology; and 3) recreation and scenic.

Ecologic Models and Water Quality Models: Models that can effectively and efficiently prioritize land to focus on-the-ground efforts and identify where more detailed evaluations are needed. A variety of models exist to assist with prioritization. This project will overlay and assess the results of water quality models, such as the Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT), with ecological models such as the statewide Ecological Corridors.

Priority Minor Watershed Conservation Areas: Using the results of the prioritization protocol approximately 3 to 7 priority conservation areas will be identified. For each area the project will:

- Evaluate what **threats or stressors** are present,
- **Prioritize** where water quality, ecological quality and recreation **systems are most in need of protection or restoration**,
- Create a **list of actions** most likely have a positive influence on the target systems or negative impacts on a non-target system (i.e., a water quality practice may degrade a native plant population), and
- Evaluate the **most appropriate** implementation **funding sources**.

Subwatershed Assessments: Approximately 3 to 5 Subwatershed Assessments will be conducted in priority areas. These assessments will identify sites (within parcels) and the best management practices to implement at those sites to realize water quality, ecological health, economic benefits. The results will be shared with officials and the public as educational outreach. These assessments will include detailed natural resource and water quality modeling, a prioritized list of activities and cost-benefit analysis of priority conservation actions.

Priority Actions: The subwatershed assessments will guide the development of 30 to 50 **priority actions** that will function as a to-do list for project partners in the identified priority areas.

Implement Projects: Out of the 30-50 priority projects, 7 will be installed in partnership with landowners, federal agencies, and others using matching funds.

Lead Organizations: Washington Conservation District, Chisago County Soil and Water Conservation District

Partners: St. Croix River Association (SCRA)

Summary Budget Information for Activity 2:

ENRTF Budget: \$94,000
Amount Spent: \$0
Balance: \$94,000

Activity Completion Date:

Outcome	Completion	ENRTF Budget
1. A basin to site Prioritization Protocol identifying the best returns for investment	January 2013	10,000
2. 3 to 7 Priority Minor Watershed Conservation Areas identified	July 2013	15,000
3. 3 to 5 Subwatershed Assessments that identify the most cost-effective projects with the highest conservation value. ID 30 to 50 Priority Actions.	May 2014	58,000
4. Installation of 7 practices on the ground using ENRTF and matching funds	May 2014	11,000
		94,000

V. DISSEMINATION:

Description: Information about the project will be shared via multiple delivery mechanisms. The main method will be the SCRA website and quarterly newsletter. Additional outreach efforts will include Facebook updates, articles in local papers, and presentations. Once this project is completed, the collaborative approach will become the new “business as usual” for stakeholders, shape how they make their investments in the basin and establish priorities for funding requests from federal sources and others. Successful completion of the project will stimulate and inform similar efforts in Wisconsin. SCRA will continue to facilitate coordinated work across the basin and leverage additional funding.

Project Status as of: July 1, 2012
Project Status as of: January 1, 2013
Project Status as of: July 1, 2013
Project Status as of: January 1, 2014
Final Report Summary: July 1, 2014

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. ENRTF Budget:

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Explanation
Personnel:	\$117,800	SCRA and SWCD project implementation
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	\$500	
Printing:	\$500	
Travel Expenses in MN:	\$1,200	
Other:	\$0	
TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:	\$120,000.00	

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: N/A

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

Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) funded with this ENRTF appropriation: 0.75 over duration of project combined among all major partners (SCRA, WCD, and CCSWCD)

Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) estimated to be funded through contracts with this ENRTF appropriation: N/A

B. Other Funds:

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
Federal			
USFS “Linking Sustainable Forestry with Water Quality . . .” Project	\$124,000	\$	Activity 1 and 2
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:	\$124,000.00	\$	

VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Team/Partners

- St. Croix River Association (SCRA) is the sponsoring organization, will manage the project, and lead Activity 1.
- Washington Conservation District and Chisago County Soil and Water Conservation District will receive funds to lead Activity 2, identify local priorities (Activity 1), implement subwatershed assessments, and install projects on the ground.
- Conservation St. Croix (CSC), a partnership of the nine Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the St. Croix Basin, will provide guidance and local support.
- MN DNR will provide technical assistance to ensure integration of forestry, habitat, wildlife and outdoor recreation into the prioritization protocol.*
- BWSR will provide planning and long-term implementation support. BWSR manages significant state funding for conservation and this project will help target those resources.
- WI Partners include WDNR, local Land and Water Conservation Departments, and others.
- Landowners will provide in-kind and cash match to support on-the-ground implementation.
- See associated workplan for the USFS-funded “Linking Sustainable Forestry with Water Quality in the upper St. Croix Basin” Project.

*In 2010 DNR Central Region Management Team selected the St Croix Basin as its priority landscape and is committed to participating in collaborative efforts in the basin. This project is also congruent with the new Division of Ecological and Water Resources (EWR) vision for healthy watersheds by leading and supporting efforts to improve water, biodiversity, and ecosystem services through integrated, collaborative and community-based approaches. No ENRTF funds will be provided to the DNR for these or other activities.

B. Project Impact and Long Term Strategy: Once this project is completed, the collaborative approach will become the new “business as usual” for stakeholders, shape how they make their investments in the basin and establish priorities for funding requests from federal sources and others. Successful completion of the project will stimulate and inform similar efforts in Wisconsin. SCRA will continue to facilitate coordinated work across the basin and leverage additional funding.

C. Spending History:

Funding Source	M.L. 2005 or FY 2006- 07	M.L. 2007 or FY 2008	M.L. 2008 or FY 2009	M.L. 2009 or FY 2010	M.L. 2010 or FY 2011
See below					

This project is a new effort for the SCRA and intensification of ongoing WCD and CCSWCD efforts.

VIII. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION LIST:

No property will be acquired. Restoration projects will be identified by Activity 2.

IX. MAP(S):

See Attached

X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: N/A

XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted on: July 1, 2012; January 1, 2013; July 1, 2013; and January 1, 2014. A final report and associated products will be submitted by August 1, 2014 as requested by the LCCMR.

September 30, 2011

Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
State Office Building, Room 65
St. Paul, MN 55155

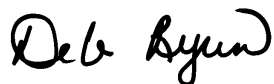
Re: Saint Croix Basin Conservation Planning and Protection

Dear LCCMR Co-Chairs – Sen. Olson, Rep. Hackbarth and Ms. Gibson:

According to the appropriation language in M.L. 2011, First Special Session, Chp. 2, Art. 3, Sec. 2, Subd. 3(o), “Saint Croix Basin Conservation Planning and Protection” for \$120,000 the language states that “this appropriation must be matched by \$120,000 of nonstate cash or qualifying in-kind funds”.

The St. Croix River Association will provide a cash match of \$120,000 over the period of this Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund project with the newly funded grant to St. Croix River Association from the US Forest Service titled, “Linking Sustainable Forestry with Water Quality in the Upper St. Croix Basin”.

Thank you for this opportunity,



Deb Ryun
Executive Director

Attachment A: Budget Detail for M.L. 2011 (FY 2012-13) Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Projects

Project Title: <i>Saint Croix Basin Conservation Planning and Protection</i>								
Legal Citation: <i>Appropriation Language for "Saint Croix</i>								
Project Manager: <i>Deb Ryun, SCRA</i>								
M.L. 2011 (FY 2012-13) ENRTF Appropriation: <i>\$120,000</i>								
Project Length and Completion Date: <i>Three Years; June 30, 2014</i>								
Date of Update: <i>September 28, 2011</i>								
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Activity 1 Budget	Amount Spent	Balance	Activity 2 Budget	Amount Spent	Balance	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM	Conservation Strategy			Prioritization and Implementation				
Personnel (Wages and Benefits) <i>SCRA Steward (Salary+(Salary*.25 Benefits))</i>	19,000	0	19,000	0	0	0	19,000	19,000
WCD Manager/Engineer (Salary+(Salary*.25 Benefits))	2,975	0	2,975	42,925	0	42,925	45,900	45,900
CCSWCD Manager/Technician (Salary+(Salary*.25 Benefits))	2,975	0	2,975	42,925	0	42,925	45,900	45,900
Service contracts <i>Project Installation Funds</i>		0	0	7,000	0	7,000	7,000	7,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies <i>Meeting supplies</i>	400	0	400	100	0	100	500	500
Printing	250	0	250	250	0	250	500	500
Travel expenses in Minnesota Mileage	400	0	400	800	0	800	1,200	1,200
Other <i>(Describe the activity and cost - be specific)</i>		0	0		0	0	0	0
COLUMN TOTAL	\$26,000	\$0	\$26,000	\$94,000	\$0	\$94,000	\$120,000	\$120,000