



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

Date of Status Update:

Date of Next Status Update: 2/1/2012

Date of Work Plan Approval: 8/11/2011

Project Completion Date: 6/30/2014

Is this an amendment request? _____

Project Title: MeCC VI - MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. (2.6/3.3)

Project Manager: Deborah Loon

Affiliation: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust Inc

Address: 2312 Seabury Ave

City: Minneapolis **State:** MN **Zipcode:** 55406

Telephone Number: (612) 801-1935

Email Address: dloon@mnvalleytrust.org

Web Address: http://www.mnvalleytrust.org

Location:

Counties Impacted: Carver, Le Sueur, Scott, Sibley

Ecological Section Impacted: Minnesota and Northeast Iowa Morainal (222M)

Total ENRTF Project Budget:	ENRTF Appropriation \$:	600,000
	Amount Spent \$:	0
	Balance \$:	600,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2011, First Special Session, Chp. 2, Art.3, Sec. 2, Subd. 04i2.6/3.3

Appropriation Language:

\$1,737,000 the first year and \$1,738,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for the acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements. Of this appropriation, \$150,000 the first year and \$150,000 the second year are to the commissioner of natural resources for agency programs and \$3,175,000 is for the agreements as follows: \$100,000 the first year and \$100,000 the second year with Friends of the Mississippi River; \$517,000 the first year and \$518,000 the second year with Dakota County; \$200,000 the first year and \$200,000 the second year with Great River Greening; \$220,000 the first year and \$220,000 the second year with Minnesota Land Trust; \$300,000 the first year and \$300,000 the second year with Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.; and \$250,000 the first year and \$250,000 the second year with The Trust for Public Land for planning, restoring, and protecting priority natural areas in the metropolitan area, as defined under Minnesota Statutes, section 473.121, subdivision 2, and portions of the surrounding counties, through 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 habitable 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. An entity that acquires a conservation easement with appropriations from the trust fund must have a long-term stewardship plan for the easement and a fund established for monitoring and enforcing the agreement. Money appropriated from the trust fund for easement acquisition may be used to establish a monitoring, management, and enforcement fund as approved in the work program. An annual financial report is required for any monitoring, management, and enforcement fund established, including expenditures from the fund. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2014, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

I. PROJECT TITLE: MeCC 6 - 2.6/3.3 Priority Expansion and Restoration - Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

II. PROJECT SUMMARY: The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. will improve habitat connectivity, combat habitat loss, protect native plant and animal species, improve water quality of the Minnesota River and increase public access to natural lands through the following activities:

(1) Fee title acquisition of 125 acres to expand one or more of the following units of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge – Blakely Unit (Scott County), Jessenland Unit (Sibley County), Rapids Lake Unit (Carver County), St. Lawrence Unit (Scott County), San Francisco Unit (Carver County) and a prospective new unit between Henderson and LeSueur (LeSueur and Sibley Counties). The expansion lands have been prioritized by the USFWS and the Trust is working with willing landowners. At least 125 additional acres will be acquired for the Refuge by the MN Valley Trust using other, non-state funds. The lands acquired will be donated to the USFWS for perpetual management for wildlife and wildlife-dependent recreation as part of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

(2) Restoration and enhancement of 405 acres of oak savanna and remnant native prairie communities on Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge units near Jordan and Belle Plaine. Work has been designed by the USFWS and will include removal of invasive and non-native species on a 15 acre oak savanna on Long Meadow Lake Unit (Hennepin County) and 190 acre oak savanna on Louisville Swamp Unit (Scott County), as well as prescribed fire on those two units and a 200 acre mesic prairie on the Jessenland Unit (Sibley County) of the Refuge. The work will be completed using mechanical, chemical and prescribed fire methods.

III. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of February 1, 2012:

Project Status as of August 1, 2012:

Project Status as of February 1, 2013:

Project Status as of August 1, 2013:

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: Expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Description: The Minnesota Valley Trust will complete fee title acquisition of at least 125 acres to expand one or more of the following units of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge –

- Blakely Unit (Scott County)
- Jessenland Unit (Sibley County)
- Rapids Lake Unit (Carver County)
- St. Lawrence Unit (Scott County)
- San Francisco Unit (Carver County)
- A prospective new unit between Henderson and LeSueur as delineated by USFWS (LeSueur and Sibley Counties).

At least 125 additional acres will be acquired for the Refuge by the MN Valley Trust using other, non-state funds.

The Refuge expansion units have been prioritized and delineated by the USFWS in its Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) through a public planning process as having strong potential to provide high

quality habitat for wildlife and opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation. The lands are along the Minnesota River and include river frontage, floodplain and cropland. The CCP is being updated in 2011.

The prospective lands offer significant habitat for wildlife and opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation. The lands run along the Minnesota River and include river frontage, floodplain, cropland and bluffs. Some are adjacent to lands already in public ownership (USFWS, DNR) or previously acquired by the MN Valley Trust for the Refuge expansion.

These acquisitions will connect the river, floodplain forest and prairie habitat in the Minnesota River bottoms, benefiting many species of wildlife including wood ducks, mallards, bald eagles, grassland nesting birds as well as numerous resident game species such as turkeys and deer.

This project will improve water quality by retiring cropland in the Minnesota River Valley and restoring lands to the natural habitats of floodplain forest, wetlands and prairie. When donated to the USFWS, the public will be given access to the lands for wildlife-dependent recreational activities, such as birding, photography, hiking, interpretation, hunting and fishing.

Following acquisition, the MN Valley Trust (MVT) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will develop a restoration and management plan, then restore and enhance the floodplain forest, wetlands and prairie, as appropriate to the parcel. Cropland will be retired and drain tile broken. The MVT is the source of funds for this restoration and management work; the funds are secure.

The lands acquired will be donated to the USFWS for perpetual management for wildlife and wildlife-dependent recreation as part of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Increased operations and maintenance costs will be the responsibility of the MVT and USFWS.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 500,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$ 500,000

Activity Completion Date: June 30, 2013

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. <i>Acquire fee title to 125 acres for priority expansion of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge</i>	June 30, 2013	\$ 500,000

Activity Status as of February 1, 2012:

Activity Status as of August 1, 2012:

Activity Status as of February 1, 2013:

Final Report Summary:

ACTIVITY 2: Restore & Enhance Remnant Oak Savannas and Native Prairie

Description: Restoration and enhancement of 405 acres of oak savanna and remnant native prairie communities on Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge units near Jordan and Belle Plaine. Work has been designed by the USFWS and will include removal of invasive and non-native species on a 15

acre oak savanna on Long Meadow Lake Unit (Hennepin County) and 190 acre oak savanna on Louisville Swamp Unit (Scott County), as well as prescribed fire on those two units and a 200 acre mesic prairie on the Jessenland Unit (Sibley County) of the Refuge.

Ecological restoration plans have been developed or will be developed by the USFWS consistent with the highest quality conservation and ecological goals for these sites. An initial restoration evaluation will be provided at completion of this grant appropriation as part of the final report, and a second evaluation will be completed three years after completion of the project.

The restoration and enhancement work in this project will be completed using mechanical, chemical and prescribed fire methods. The Conservation Corps of Minnesota will be contracted for chemical and mechanical removal, when available. Other qualified contractors will be used for prescribed fire and for chemical and mechanical removal, when needed.

Restoration and enhancement of native grassland and oak savanna communities requires multiple treatment phases over several years. Work to be accomplished with this proposal represents several restoration phases, depending on the specific project area. Long-term maintenance and management will be accomplished as part of the Refuge budget (federal funds), although other funds may be sought as needs are identified.

The savanna and native prairie remnants targeted for restoration in this project are recognized as rare ecosystems in the Minnesota State Action Plan, *"Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare"* (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 2006). They support several species occurrences documented in the DNR's *Minnesota County Biological Survey Heritage Database*, and are listed as critical habitat types in the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District (2004).

Summary Budget Information for Activity 2:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 100,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$ 100,000

Activity Completion Date: June 30, 2013

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
2. Restore and enhance remnant oak savannas and native prairie on 405 acres of existing units of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge	June 30, 2013	\$ 100,000

Activity Status as of February 1, 2012:

Activity Status as of August 1, 2012:

Activity Status as of February 1, 2013:

Final Report Summary:

V. DISSEMINATION:

Description: As projects are completed, the Minnesota Valley Trust will announce the accomplishments through press releases and the Trust website.

Status as of February 1, 2012:

Status as of August 1, 2012:

Status as of February 1, 2013:

Final Report Summary:

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. ENRTF Budget:

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Explanation
Service Contracts	\$ 90,000	Contracts with Minnesota Conservation Corps and other qualified private restoration organizations, as appropriate to perform prescribed fire operations, herbicide application and mechanical invasive tree and other woody species removal.
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	\$ 10,000	Herbicide for treatment of invasive trees and other woody species after removal to prevent re-sprouting.
Fee Title Acquisition:	\$ 500,000	Fee title acquisition of 125 acres to expand the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge.
TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:	\$ 600,000	

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: N/A

B. Other Funds:

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
Non-state			
MN Valley Trust funds, other non-state funds	\$ 500,000	\$	Fee title acquisition of 125 acres to expand the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge.
State			
	\$ 0	\$	
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:	\$ 500,000	\$	

VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS), all Metro Conservation Corridors Partners, Friends of the Minnesota Valley, local communities

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:

This project is part of a long-term strategy to expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge by up to 10,000 acres and restore and enhance the Refuge's forest, wetland and prairie habitat for wildlife and wildlife-dependent recreation. The expansion and restoration strategy was developed by the US

Fish and Wildlife Service in its Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Refuge, completed September 2004 after a thorough public input process. The CCP is being updated by the USFWS in 2011.

This project will further acquisition work completed previously by the Minnesota Valley Trust with support from the ENRTF. The benefits of the project include the following:

- Connect the river, floodplain forest and prairie habitat in the Minnesota River bottoms, benefiting many species of wildlife. It will increase the breeding and migratory habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, neotropical migrants and other species, including non-migratory resident species.
- Improve water quality of the Minnesota River by retiring cropland and restoring lands to the natural habitats of floodplain forest, wetlands and prairie.
- Expand the public's access to and enjoyment of public lands in and near the Twin Cities metropolitan area for wildlife-dependent recreational activities of birding, photography, hiking, interpretation, hunting and fishing.

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
ENRTF – MeCC	\$ 230,000	\$ 210,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 325,000
Other non-state funds, including MN Valley Trust and private contributions	\$ 428,000	\$ 376,473	\$ 197,019	\$ 225,000	\$ 325,000

VIII. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION LIST: Attached

IX. MAP(S): Attached

X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: N/A

XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted not later than February 1, 2012, August 1, 2012, and February 1, 2013. A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 1, 2013 as requested by the LCCMR.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2011 Acquisition/Restoration List

Project Title: 2.6/3.3 MeCC 6 Priority Expansion and Restoration MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Project Manager Name: Deborah Loon

M.L. 2011 ENRTF Appropriation: \$ 600,000

#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	Geographical Coordinates (Provide Latitude/Longitude OR UTM-X/UTM-Y)		Ecosystem Description	Ecological Significance	Activity Description	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles (if applicable)	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)	Status
		Latitude or UTM-X	Longitude or UTM-Y							
1	Blakely Unit of MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MVNWR)	44°34'40"N	93°52'29"W	Floodplain Forest	Critical Habitat Type (MNV)	Fee title acquisition	125		USFWS	Outreach with landowners is underway and ongoing
2	Jessenland Unit of MVNWR	44°34'28"N	93°54'20"W	Floodplain Forest	Critical Habitat Type (MNV)	Fee title acquisition	125		USFWS	Outreach with landowners is underway and ongoing
3	St. Lawrence Unit of MVNWR	44°39'01"N	93°42'13"W	Sedge Meadow	Rare ecosystem (MCBS)	Fee title acquisition	125		USFWS	Outreach with landowners is underway and ongoing
4	San Francisco Unit of MVNWR	44°41'34"N	93°40'50"W	Floodplain Forest	Critical Habitat Type (MNV)	Fee title acquisition	125		USFWS	Outreach with landowners is underway and ongoing
5	Rapids Lake Unit of MVNWR	44°42'38"N	93°38'9"W	Oak Savanna	Rare ecosystem (MCBS)	Fee title acquisition	125		USFWS	Outreach with landowners is underway and ongoing
6	Prospective new unit of MVNWR between Henderson & LeSueur	44°30'2"N	93°53'25"W	Floodplain Forest	Critical Habitat Type (MNV)	Fee title acquisition	125		USFWS	Outreach with landowners is underway and ongoing
7	Long Meadow Lake Unit of MVNWR	44°51'34"N	93°12'58"W	Oak Savanna	Rare ecosystem (MCBS)	Removal of non-native, invasive species and prescribed fire	15		USFWS	Planning in preparation for receipt of funding 7/11
8	Louisville Swamp Unit of MVNWR	44°44'14"N	93°36'3"W	Oak Savanna	Rare ecosystem (MCBS)	Removal of non-native, invasive species and prescribed fire	190		USFWS	Planning in preparation for receipt of funding 7/11
9	Jessenland Unit of MVNWR	44°35'44"N	93°54'10"W	Tallgrass Prairie	Rare ecosystem (MCBS)	Prescribed fire	200		USFWS	Planning in preparation for receipt of funding 7/11
10										

NOTES: Acquisition will be completed from within this prospective parcel list (#1-6), as delineated by the USFWS for the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge expansion.

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

Project Title: 2.6/3.3 - MeCC 6 Priority Expansion and Restoration MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Legal Citation: Fill in your project's legal citation from the appropriation language

Project Manager: Deborah Loon

M.L. 2011 (FY 2012-13) ENRTF Appropriation: \$ 600,000

Project Length and Completion Date: June 30, 2013

Date of Update: February 1, 2012

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	Acquisition			Restoration				
Service contracts <i>Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota and other qualified private restoration organizations to perform prescribed fire operations, herbicide application and mechanical invasive tree and other woody species removal.</i>				90,000	0	90,000	90,000	90,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies <i>Herbicide for treatment of invasive trees and other woody species after removal to prevent resprouting.</i>				10,000	0	10,000	10,000	10,000
Fee Title Acquisition <i>Fee title acquisition of 250 acres to expand the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Land acquired will be donated to the US Fish and Wildlife Service.</i>	500,000	0	500,000				500,000	500,000
COLUMN TOTAL	\$500,000		\$500,000	\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000	\$600,000	\$600,000



MECC-LCCMR Ph. 6 MVT
Mn Valley NWR - Jessenlands Unit Native Grass Restoration
Woody/Invasive Species: Mechanical, Chemical, Rx Fire
44d 35m 44s N, 93d 54m 10s W



0 425 850 1,700 2,550 3,400
Feet

GS 5/31/11



MECC-LCCMR Ph. 6 MVT
Mn Valley NWR - Long Meadow Lk. Unit Oak Savanna Resto.
Woody/Invasive Species: Mechanical, Chemical, Rx Fire
44d 51m 34s N, 93d 12m 58s W



0 90 180 360 540 720
Feet

GS5/31/11



MECC-LCCMR Ph. 6 MVT
Mn Valley NWR - Louisville Swamp Unit Oak Savanna Resto.
Woody/Invasive Species: Mechanical, Chemical, Rx Fire
44d 44m 14s N, 93d 36m 03s W



0 212.5 425 850 1,275 1,700 Feet

GS 5/31/11

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Expansion Units

