



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

Date of Status Update:

Date of Next Status Update: 5/1/2012

Date of Work Plan Approval: 8/11/2011

Project Completion Date: 6/30/2014

Is this an amendment request? _____

Project Title: HCP VII - Priority Acquisition, MN Valley Wetland Management District (4h)

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: Blue Earth, Le Sueur

Ecological Section Impacted: North Central Glaciated Plains (251B)

Total ENRTF Project Budget:	ENRTF Appropriation \$:	400,000
	Amount Spent \$:	0
	Balance \$:	400,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2011, First Special Session, Chp. 2, Art.3, Sec. 2, Subd. 04j4h

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, \$125,000 the first year and \$125,000 the second year are to the commissioner of natural resources for agency programs and \$3,225,000 is for agreements as follows: \$637,000 the first year and \$638,000 the second year with Ducks Unlimited, Inc.; \$38,000 the first year and \$37,000 the second year with Friends of Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District; \$25,000 the first year and \$25,000 the second year with Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe; \$225,000 the first year and \$225,000 the second year with Minnesota Land Trust; \$200,000 the first year and \$200,000 the second year with Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.; \$242,000 the first year and \$243,000 the second year with Pheasants Forever, Inc.; and \$245,000 the first year and \$245,000 the second year with The Trust for Public Land to plan, restore, and acquire fragmented landscape corridors that connect areas of quality habitat to sustain fish, wildlife, and plants. The United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, is an authorized cooperating partner in the appropriation. Expenditures are limited to the project corridor areas as defined in the work program. Land acquired with this appropriation must be sufficiently improved to meet at least minimum habitat and facility management standards, as determined by the commissioner of natural resources. 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 who 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: HCP7-4h Priority Acquisition, MN Valley Wetland Management District

II. PROJECT SUMMARY: The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. will protect, through fee title acquisition, at least 80 acres of priority lands with high quality natural resources and habitat for wildlife and human benefit for the Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District in the Southern Lakes Region. It will expand an existing USFWS (federal) Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) or create a new WPA, retire heavily-drained, marginal farmland and restore wetlands and grasslands.

After restoration of wetlands and grasslands, the land will be donated to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to be managed as a WPA. The land will be open to the public for wildlife-dependent recreational activities.

III. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of November 30, 2011:

Project Status as of May 30, 2012:

Project Status as of November 30, 2012:

Project Status as of May 30, 2013:

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1:

Description: The Minnesota Valley Trust (MVT) will acquire in fee title at least 80 acres of priority habitat to expand an existing USFWS (federal) Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) or create a new WPA in Blue Earth and/or Le Sueur County in the Southern Lakes Region. Using other, non-state funds, MVT will acquire at least 40 additional acres. All lands will then be restored using MVT and other non-state funds, which are secure and included in the leveraged funds in this proposal.

Potential projects are identified by the Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District of the USFWS, as called for in the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District (see Objective 5.3, page 73 of CCP). Lands are acquired under the authority of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act, Public Law 85-585 and Wetlands Loan Act of 1961 (see page 8 of CCP).

Potential projects include:

- Acquisition of land to expand the Perch Lake WPA in Beauford Township of Blue Earth County. Perch Lake is an important migratory waterfowl resting lake and a DNR designated shallow lake. The Trust earlier acquired other parcels to establish the Perch Lake WPA, in part with ENRTF funds through HCP Phases 3 and 4, and has completed substantial wetland restoration work. Ducks Unlimited has installed a new water control structure to Perch Lake. A tremendous response by many wildlife species has been observed on the newly restored lands. This project is in the Minnesota River Prairie Ecological Subsection, noted as 251Ba in the Statewide Conservation Plan.
- Acquisition of priority land to create a new WPA parcel in Blue Earth County. The new WPA location will include significant prairie pothole habitat suitable for a host of grassland and wetland birds. The location will be strategically selected by USFWS through a prioritization process that uses the best scientific data available. The WPA will be located in an area with potential to build a 4-square mile habitat complex of public and private restored lands. This project will be in the Minnesota River Prairie Ecological Subsection, noted as 251Ba in the Statewide Conservation Plan.

- Acquisition of an 80 acre parcel to expand the Fickling WPA in Le Sueur County. The area once hosted >40 wetlands/mi² and many large shallow lake basins that provided critical habitat for migratory and nesting birds. The addition of this tract will provide the opportunity to restore and manage a 40+ acre semi-permanent wetland needed to fulfill waterfowl production objectives on this WPA. This project is in the Oak Savannah Ecological Subsection, noted as 222Me in the Statewide Conservation Plan.

After acquisition, the Minnesota Valley Trust, through its subsidiary, Minnesota Valley Lands, Inc. and working with the USFWS and other conservation partners, will develop an ecological restoration and management plan that is consistent with the highest quality conservation and ecological goals for the site, and then restore wetland and grassland habitat. Restoration funding will be provided by the Trust and other sources, including local and federal partners.

After restoration, the lands will be donated to the USFWS for management as part of the Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District. The land will be open to the public for wildlife-dependent recreational activities. Long-term operations and management costs for the acquired land will be the responsibility of the USFWS.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 400,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$ 400,000

Activity Completion Date: June 30, 2013

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. Acquire 80 acres of priority lands to expand or establish a USFWS Waterfowl Production Area in the Southern Lakes Region	June 30, 2013	\$ 400,000

Activity Status as of November 30, 2011:

Activity Status as of May 30, 2012:

Activity Status as of November 30, 2012:

Activity Status as of May 30, 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 November 30, 2011:

Status as of May 30, 2012:

Status as of November 30, 2012:

Status as of May 30, 2013:

Final Report Summary:

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. ENRTF Budget:

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Explanation
Fee Title Acquisition:	\$ 400,000	Fee title acquisition of 80 acres to expand or establish a Waterfowl Production Area in the Southern Lakes Region.
TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:	\$ 400,000	

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	\$ 400,000	\$	Fee title acquisition of 40 acres to expand or establish a Waterfowl Production Area in the Southern Lakes Region; habitat restoration of 120 acres
State			
	\$ 0	\$	
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:	\$ 400,000	\$	

VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners: This proposal is part of the Habitat Conservation Partnership Phase 7 Proposal. The Minnesota Valley Trust works in close partnership with the USFWS to (1) identify properties for the MN Valley Wetland Management District, then (2) plan and (3) manage the restoration of the lands. Other partners include DNR, the local watershed management organizations (e.g., Cobb River Watershed Organization), Blue Earth and Le Sueur County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, state conservation organizations and local conservation clubs (e.g., MN Pheasants, Inc – Blue Earth County).

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy: This project is anticipated by the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District of the USFWS. It also is part of a larger strategy involving many other established projects and efforts -- NAWCA grants of more than \$25 million and more than 50 partners, USFWS Challenge Grants and Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, EPA Clean Water grants, CREP, Wetland Reserve Program, Reinvest in Minnesota, local grant programs and more than 20 local sportsman clubs active in the area. Partners have acquired and restored > 10,000 acres of habitat in this part of the Southern Lakes Area through various conservation programs.

This project will meet the following recommendations in the Statewide Conservation Plan -- protect priority land habitats; improve connectivity and access to outdoor recreation; restore land, wetlands and

wetland-associated watersheds and keep water on the landscape. It also meets the objectives in the LCCMR Strategic Plan, MN DNR Long Range Duck Recovery Plan, Prairie Pothole Joint Venture, NAWCA, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

This project will restore the breeding population and migration objectives for waterfowl in the Mississippi Flyway, benefitting a host of species, including mallard, blue-winged teal, lesser scaup, northern pintail, tundra and trumpeter swans, redhead, wood duck and canvasback.

The project also will improve water quality in sub-watersheds of the Middle Minnesota River. The Cobb River, Watonwan River, and the Le Sueur Creek watersheds will gain in water quality by retiring marginal cropland and restoring the wetland and grassland habitat.

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 – HCP	\$ 126,878	\$ 100,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 0
Other non-state funds, including MN Valley Trust and private contributions	\$1,688,649	\$ 232,976	\$ 80,196	\$ 100,000	\$ 0

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 November 30, 2011, May 30, 2012, November 30, 2012 and May 30, 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: HCP7-4h Priority Acquisition, MN Valley Wetland Management District

Project Manager Name: Deborah Loon

M.L. 2011 ENRTF Appropriation: \$ 400,000

#	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	Perch Lake WPA Expansion	427288E	4870676N	Grassland/ Wetland Complex	Critical Habitat Type (MNV)	Fee title acquisition	80	0	USFWS	Outreach with landowners is underway and ongoing
2	Fickling WPA Expansion	439080E	4919376N	Grassland/ Wetland Complex	Critical Habitat Type (MNV)	Fee title acquisition	80	0	USFWS	Outreach with landowners is underway and ongoing
4	New WPA, to be identified			Grassland/ Wetland Complex	Critical Habitat Type (MNV)	Fee title acquisition	80	0	USFWS	Outreach with landowners is underway and ongoing
<p>NOTES: The Minnesota Valley Trust is working with willing landowners to expand existing Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) and establish new WPAs, as prioritized by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. The 80 acres (grant) and 40 acres (non-state match) to be acquired will either expand one of the existing WPAs or create a new WPA in the areas noted above. After acquisition, the Trust and USFWS will develop a restoration and management plan. Resotration of wetlands and grassland complexes will be completed using MN Valley Trust funds that are part of the leveraged funds proposed for this project. The land will be donated to the USFWS for perpetual management as a WPA.</p>										

Attachment A: Budget Detail for M.L. 2011 (FY 2012-13) Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Projects				
Project Title: HCP7-4h Priority Acquisition, Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District				
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: \$400,000				
Project Length and Completion Date: 2 years - June 30, 2013				
Date of Update: June 6, 2011				
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Activity 1 Budget	Amount Spent	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM	<i>Fee acquisition 80 acres</i>			
Fee Title Acquisition	400,000	0	400,000	400,000
COLUMN TOTAL	\$400,000	\$0	\$400,000	\$400,000

