



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2013 Work Plan

Date of Status Update Report:

Date of Next Status Update Report: 02/01/2014

Date of Work Plan Approval: 06/25/2013

Project Completion Date: 6/30/2016

Is this an amendment request? N

PROJECT TITLE: MeCC VII–3.2 – Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements

Project Manager: John Curry

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Location: Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Goodhue, Hennepin, Isanti, Le Sueur, Nicollet, Ramsey, Rice, Scott, Sherburne, Sibley, Washington, Wright Counties

Total ENRTF Project Budget:

ENRTF Appropriation: \$300,000

Amount Spent: \$0

Balance: \$300,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2013, Chp. 52, Sec. 2, Subd. 04d3.2

Appropriation Language:

\$2,000,000 the first year is from the trust fund for the acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements. Of this appropriation, \$10,000 is to the commissioner of natural resources for agency programs and \$1,990,000 is to the commissioner of natural resources for agreements as follows: \$304,000 with Friends of the Mississippi River; \$368,000 with Dakota County; \$208,000 with Great River Greening; \$310,000 with Minnesota Land Trust; \$400,000 with Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.; and \$400,000 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 plan. This appropriation may not be used for the purchase of habitable residential structures, unless expressly approved in the work plan. 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 plan. Lands that would require payments in lieu of taxes under Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.061 or 477A.12, shall not be acquired with money from this appropriation. Up to \$54,000 is for use by Minnesota Land Trust in a monitoring and enforcement fund as approved in the work plan and subject to subdivision 16. 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 plan. 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, 2016, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

I. PROJECT TITLE: MeCC VII-3.2 – Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements

II. PROJECT STATEMENT:

The Minnesota Land Trust has worked extensively in the greater Twin Cities area since 1992 to permanently protect natural and scenic lands with an emphasis on using conservation easements. This strategy has been acknowledged by a variety of stakeholders, and in the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, as one of the key tools necessary to achieve land conservation goals in a metropolitan area where escalating land values prohibit fee title acquisition of many priority lands.

Our goal is to permanently protect priority lands that contribute to a regional connected network of critical habitat within the greater Twin Cities area and help maintain water quality of some of the region’s most important rivers, lakes, and streams. To this end, the Land Trust will work to identify tracts of land within the mapped project areas critical to the protection of habitat and shoreland. We will prioritize protecting high-quality habitat for a variety of migratory birds and species in greatest conservation need, such as common loon, red-shouldered hawk, northern pintail, bobolink, and wood thrush.

The Land Trust works only with perpetual conservation easements. These easements prohibit land uses or development that negatively affect important habitat and other conservation values, require habitat management plans as appropriate, and direct the use of native vegetation in conjunction with any required restoration. The Land Trust also will explore the potential for public access with landowners on a case-by-case basis. The conservation easements may be either purchased or donated, or a combination of the two (bargain purchase). These easements are monitored annually and enforced as necessary under the Land Trust’s comprehensive conservation easement monitoring, management, and enforcement program. In order to fulfill these stewardship obligations, grant funds may also be requested for our dedicated Stewardship and Enforcement Fund on a project-by-project basis in accordance with our LCCMR-approved policies and procedures, the Land Trust’s Project Cost Analysis, and as described in the document attached to the initial work plan for this appropriation. The attached Stewardship Overview describes the Land Trust’s stewardship program including easement administration and easement monitoring and defense. A copy of the updated 2012 Project Cost Analysis has been separately provided to LCCMR. The Land Trust will report to LCCMR annually on the status and performance of the Stewardship and Enforcement Fund and monitoring activity associated with easements acquired with funds from this grant. This reporting includes submitting an annual financial audit of the Stewardship and Enforcement Fund.

Proposed activities under this grant include: 1) contacting and negotiating with interested landowners; 2) drafting and completing conservation easements; 3) documenting property conditions; and 4) dedicating funds for the perpetual monitoring, management and enforcement of those easements.

III. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of February 1, 2014:

Project Status as of August 1, 2014:

Project Status as of February 1, 2015:

Project Status as of August 1, 2015:

Project Status as of February 1, 2016:

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: Protect Significant Habitat through Conservation Easements

Description: The Land Trust will protect critical habitat within the mapped corridors by: 1) contacting landowners; 2) negotiating and completing permanent conservation easements on 100 acres of land (including documenting property conditions and creating management plans as appropriate); and 3) dedicating funds for the perpetual monitoring, management and enforcement of the easements.

The Land Trust will work primarily with donated easements, purchasing easements when necessary and then at below market value whenever possible. Criteria for determining when a purchase is necessary include landowner ability to donate, connectivity of parcel to other protected lands, and quality of natural resources on the site. All potential easement projects are evaluated for habitat value (quality and quantity of existing habitat on site), context (proximity and relationship to other protected lands), opportunity/threat (which landowners will participate now), and other benefits (meeting multiple objectives, including visual and physical access, forestry goals, water quality, etc.). Current potential projects are identified on the attached list. New projects will be added as landowners are identified. We will continually evaluate potential projects and pursue those that protect the highest quality habitat and maximize public benefit.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 300,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$300,000

Activity Completion Date:

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. Protect 100 acres by completing 2-3 conservation easements by identifying and contacting landowners, completing all components of conservation easement projects, and dedicating funds for long-term management, monitoring, and enforcement.	June 30, 2016	\$ 300,000

Activity Status as of February 1, 2014:

Activity Status as of August 1, 2014:

Activity Status as of February 1, 2015:

Activity Status as of August 1, 2015:

Activity Status as of February 1, 2016:

Final Report Summary:

V. DISSEMINATION:

Description: The Land Trust will disseminate results in our publications (electronic and print) and on our web page. We will work to publicize completed projects in the media, targeting communities in which projects are located. Additionally, we will participate when possible in broader efforts of the Metro Conservation Corridors Partnership.

Status as of February 1, 2014:

Status as of August 1, 2014:

Status as of February 1, 2015:

Status as of August 1, 2015:

Status as of February 1, 2016:

Final Report Summary:

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. ENRTF Budget:

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Explanation
Personnel:	\$ 60,000	Staff expenses including salaries and benefits for approximately 0.75 FTE for 3 years (0.25 per year) as follows: conservation directors or other land protection staff (approximately 0.5 FTE) and staff attorney and other support staff (approximately 0.25 FTE) or contract staff for land protection project professional services, including negotiating and drafting conservation easements and/or completing easement baseline documentation.*
Easement Acquisition:	\$183,000	Includes purchase price of conservation easement(s); title work, insurance, etc.; maps, GIS (including project mapping by Community GIS); film; other (including appraisals, surveys, recording fees, etc.) to protect up to 100 acres of land.
Easement – Long-term Monitoring, Management, and Enforcement	\$54,000	Funds dedicated to perpetually monitoring and enforcing 2-3 easements acquired and held by the Land Trust as needed. Estimated at \$18,000 per easement per Land Trust's 2012 Cost Analysis.
Travel Expenses in MN:	\$3,000	Mileage and related travel expenses in Minnesota. \$2700 for mileage reimbursement estimated at \$0.55 per mile and \$300 for meals.
TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:	\$ 300,000	

*Consistent with our past grants, contract staff is included here to allow flexibility to supplement existing MLT staff capacity to complete anticipated outcomes.

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 total for 3 years (0.25 each year)

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

B. Other Funds:

Although we don't anticipate any cash funds at this time, we do anticipate providing leverage through value of easements donated to the Land Trust under this project.

VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners: The Land Trust is the only entity receiving funds through this request, however, the Land Trust coordinates its work with other Metro Conservation Corridors partners (please see overall proposal for list of project partners) as appropriate. Additionally, our partners include private landowners, as well as various units of state and local government that help in identifying and completing potential projects.

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy: This project is part of the Land Trust’s long-term, strategic conservation agenda. The conservation agenda sets out the specific conservation focus of the Minnesota Land Trust. This focus includes natural habitats for wildlife, fish and plants, lakeshores, rivers and streams, and scenic landscapes accessible or visible to the public. The conservation agenda also identifies a suite of critical landscapes throughout the State that embody the natural and cultural features that make Minnesota unique. The Metropolitan Conservation Corridors is one of the Land Trust’s identified critical landscapes – one that addresses the unique conservation challenges that exist in a largely developed area.

The Minnesota Land Trust has a comprehensive easement monitoring and enforcement program directed at preserving the conservation values of protected lands. With each easement accepted, the Minnesota Land Trust will secure the funds necessary to meet our long-term obligations, setting aside funds for each project as necessary to meet future needs.

C. Spending History:

Funding Source	M.L. 2007 or FY08	M.L. 2008 or FY09	M.L. 2009 or FY10	M.L. 2010 or FY11	M.L. 2011 or FY12-13
ENRTF - MeCC	\$134,000	\$225,000	\$250,000	\$485,000	\$400,000

VIII. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION LIST: See Acquisition List Attachment

IX. MAP(S): See Map Attachment

X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: N/A

XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted not later than February 1, 2014, August 1, 2014, February 1, 2015, August 1, 2015, and February 1, 2016. A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2016 as requested by the LCCMR.

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
M.L. 2013 Acquisition/Restoration List**

Project Title: MeCC 7 - 3.2 Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements
Project Manager Name: John Curry
M.L. 2013 ENRTF Appropriation: \$300,000

#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	Geographic Coordinates		Estimated Cost	Estimated Annual PILT Liabilities	County	Ecological Significance	Activity Description	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)	Status
		Latitude	Longitude										
1	Bullard Creek	544079	4930820	TBD	\$0	Goodhue	Deciduous forest and scenic blufflands along Flower Valley Trail	Conservation Easement	94	N/A	Private landowner	MN Land Trust	Initial contact complete
2	Elk River	427435	5035353	TBD	\$0	Sherburne	Undeveloped shoreline along the Elk River	Conservation Easement	125	0.2	Private landowner	MN Land Trust	Initial contact complete
3	Little Lake	516367	5028058	TBD	\$0	Chisago	Large amount of forest, grasslands, and undeveloped shoreline along Little Lake	Conservation Easement	286	0.8	Private landowner	MN Land Trust	Likely purchase; Initial contact complete
4	Little Long Lake	444181	4978868	TBD	\$0	Hennepin	Contains woodland, wetlands, grasslands and a pond. Adjacent to land previously protected with a conservation easement	Conservation Easement	10	N/A	Private landowner	MN Land Trust	Initial contact complete
5	Rum River	476218	5033118	TBD	\$0	Isanti	Contains forested acres, woodland and grasslands. Adjacent to land previously protected with conservation easement	Conservation Easement	32	N/A	Private landowner	MN Land Trust	Initial contact complete
6	Schendel Lake	447360	4994934	TBD	\$0	Hennepin	Contains hardwood forest, wetlands, grasslands and a marsh. Adjacent to land previously protected with conservation easement, lies in a regionally significant ecological area	Conservation Easement	187	0.8	Private landowner	MN Land Trust	Initial contact complete
7	Tennyson Lake	461976	5040955	TBD	\$0	Isanti	Contains significant native plant communities of oak-maple woodland, sedge meadow, mixed cattail marsh, and mixed deciduous swamp as mapped by MCBS	Conservation Easement	145	0.5	Private landowner	MN Land Trust	Initial contact complete
8	Valley Creek	517306	4972701	TBD	\$0	Washington	Contributes to the extended complex of protected forests, woods, grasslands, and wetlands in the watershed of the trout stream named Valley Creek	Conservation Easement	18	0.1	Private landowner	MN Land Trust	Initial contact complete

NOTES: The above list includes projects the Minnesota Land Trust currently is considering. Other projects may be added to the list as new landowners are contacted. Some projects on the list will not be completed. Projects not completed under the 2011 phase may be moved to future phases.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND M.L. 2013 Potential Project Summaries

Project Title: MeCC VII-3.2 – Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements

Project Manager Name: John Curry

M.L. 2013 ENRTF Appropriation: \$300,000

PROJECT: Bullard Creek

- **Conservation Values/Public Benefit:** This 94-acre property in Goodhue County contains relatively natural and undisturbed habitats of forest and grassland that support a large array of terrestrial wildlife species. The property lies within a corridor between Perched Valley WMA and two existing Bullard Creek conservation easements. This property will help to preserve the water quality and integrity of the Bullard Creek watershed. Additionally, the forested bluffs on the property provide a scenic view of rural landscape visible to the public from Flower Valley Road and the public hike/bike trail which runs along Flower Valley Road.
- **Landowner Information:** The property is owned by a private landowner.
- **Easement Summary:** We anticipate this project will be a donated conservation easement. The terms of this easement are still being negotiated.

PROJECT: Elk River

- **Conservation Values/Public Benefit:** This 125-acre property in Sherburne County contains relatively natural and undisturbed habitats of mixed hardwood forest and grasslands which provide habitat for a variety of species. The property also contains shoreline along the Elk River, a major tributary to the upper Mississippi River. Protecting this property helps maintain the water quality and ecological integrity of the river, and will provide a scenic view to travelers along the river.
- **Landowner Information:** The property is owned by a private landowner.
- **Easement Summary:** The terms of this easement are still being negotiated.

PROJECT: Little Lake

- **Conservation Values/Public Benefit:** This 286-acre property in Chisago County contains relatively natural and undisturbed habitats of deciduous forest, woodland, wetlands, grasslands and a pond, which provide habitat for a variety of species. The property also contains nearly one mile of shoreline along Little Lake, which has been identified as a key habitat for species in greatest conservation need by the DNR. Protecting this property helps maintain the water quality and ecological integrity of the lake.

- **Landowner Information:** The property is owned by a private landowner.
- **Easement Summary:** The terms of this easement are still being negotiated.

PROJECT: Little Long Lake

- **Conservation Values/Public Benefit:** This 10-acre property in Hennepin County contains relatively natural and undisturbed habitats of conifer woodland, grassland, wetlands and a pond, providing habitat for both terrestrial and aquatic species of plants and animals. The property connects with a property to the south which was protected with a conservation easement in a prior phase of this grant and is part of a larger regionally significant ecological corridor stretching to Gale Woods Farm Regional Park.
- **Landowner Information:** The property is owned by a private landowner.
- **Easement Summary:** We anticipate this project will be a donated conservation easement. The terms of this easement are still being negotiated.

PROJECT: Rum River

- **Conservation Values/Public Benefit:** This 32-acre property is located in Isanti County and contains relatively natural and undisturbed habitats of forest, grassland, and wetland. The property lies adjacent to a conservation easement completed in a prior phase of this grant, and is located in a larger corridor of remaining natural areas in this part of the county, lying a quarter of mile from both Marget Lake WMA and the Rum River, a designated wild and scenic river and a state canoe route.
- **Landowner Information:** The property is owned by a private landowner who completed a conservation easement with the Land Trust in 2008 to the east of this tract.
- **Easement Summary:** We anticipate this project will be a donated conservation easement. The terms of this easement are still being negotiated.

PROJECT: Schendel Lake

- **Conservation Values/Public Benefit:** This 187-acre property in Hennepin County contains relatively natural and undisturbed habitats of hardwood forest, grasslands, wetlands and marsh. The property is located within an area identified by the Hennepin County Environmental Services as the Hafften-Schendel-Schwappauff corridor, considered to be among the top five most important natural resource corridors that remain in private ownership in Hennepin County. Additionally, the property contains shoreline along Schendel Lake, a shallow lake and an identified key habitat for species in greatest conservation need by the DNR.
- **Landowner Information:** The property is owned by a private landowner.
- **Easement Summary:** The terms of this easement are still being negotiated.

PROJECT: Tennyson Lake

- **Conservation Values/Public Benefit:** This 145-acre property in Isanti County contains significant native plant communities of oak-maple woodland, sedge meadow, mixed cattail marsh, and mixed deciduous swamp as mapped by the Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS) that support a large array of wildlife species. Additionally, portions of this native plant community have been mapped by the MCBS as a site of biodiversity significance. The property also contains shoreline along Tennyson Lake, a shallow lake and key habitat for species in greatest conservation need, and along Spencer Brook, a tributary to the Rum River.
- **Landowner Information:** This property is owned by a private landowner.
- **Easement Summary:** The terms of this easement are still being negotiated.

PROJECT: Valley Creek

- **Conservation Values/Public Benefit:** This 18-acre property in Washington County contains relatively natural and undisturbed habitats of forest, wetlands, and grasslands. The property also contributes to the extended complex of protected forests, woods, grasslands, and wetlands in the watershed of Valley Creek, a trout stream.
- **Landowner Information:** The property is owned by a private landowner.
- **Easement Summary:** The terms of this easement are still being negotiated.

Attachment A: Budget Detail for M.L. 2011 (FY 2012-13) Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Projects
Project Title: MeCC VII-3.2 – Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements

Legal Citation: M.L. 2013, Chp. 52, Sec. 2, Subd. 04d3.2

Project Manager: John Curry

M.L. 2012 (FY 2013-14) ENRTF Appropriation: \$300,000

Project Length and Completion Date: June 30, 2016

Date of Update:
**ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST
FUND BUDGET**
**Activity 1
Budget**
Amount Spent
Balance
**TOTAL
BUDGET**
**TOTAL
BALANCE**
BUDGET ITEM
***Protect Significant Habitat Through
Conservation Easements***
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)
Staff expenses including salaries and benefits for approximately 0.75 FTE for 3 years as follows: conservation directors or other land protection staff (approximately 0.5 FTE) and staff attorney and other support staff (approximately 0.25 FTE) or contract staff for land protection project professional services, including negotiating and drafting conservation easements and/or completing easement baseline documentation.

\$60,000

\$60,000

\$60,000

\$60,000

MLT Conservation Staff
Contract Land Protection Staff
MLT Legal Staff
MLT Support Staff
Easement Acquisition
Includes purchase price of conservation easement(s); title work, insurance, etc.; maps, GIS (including project mapping by Community GIS); other (including appraisals, surveys, recording fees, etc.)

\$183,000

\$183,000

\$183,000

\$183,000

Travel expenses in Minnesota
Mileage and related travel expenses in Minnesota

\$3,000

\$3,000

\$3,000

\$3,000

Easement Monitoring & Enforcement Fund
Funds dedicated to perpetually monitoring, managing, and enforcing 2-3 easements acquired and held by the Land Trust as needed.

\$54,000

\$54,000



\$54,000

\$54,000

COLUMN TOTAL
\$300,000
\$300,000
\$300,000
\$300,000

Metro Conservation Corridors Phase VII

MINNESOTA LAND TRUST POTENTIAL PROJECTS

-  Metro Conservation Corridors
-  MLT Potential Projects

