



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2016 Work Plan

**Date of Report:** 2/18/2016

**Date of Next Status Update Report:**

**Date of Work Plan Approval:**

**Project Completion Date:** 6/30/18

**Does this submission include an amendment request?**

**PROJECT TITLE:** Wilder Forest Acquisition

**Project Manager:** June Mathiowetz

**Organization:** Washington County

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**Location:** May Township, Washington County, Minnesota

**Total ENRTF Project Budget:**

**ENRTF Appropriation:** \$500,000

**Amount Spent:** \$0

**Balance:** \$500,000

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2016, Chp. xx, Sec. 2, Subd. 9

**Appropriation Language:**

*\$500,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Washington County in cooperation with the Minnesota Food Association to partially acquire property in Washington County known as Wilder Forest to be used in organic agricultural production and habitat conservation. Any lands to be acquired must be identified in an approved work plan and be publicly owned and open to public use. The County must evaluate and provide a long-term plan for the conservation of the Wilder Forest area to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources before the acquisition is completed. This appropriation is not subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 116P.10 and must be matched by at least an equal amount of non-state funds.*

## **I. PROJECT TITLE: Wilder Forest Acquisition**

### **II. PROJECT STATEMENT:**

This appropriation to Washington County will protect through fee title acquisition approximately 80 acres - with an ultimate goal of protecting the entire 600-acre Carnelian Creek Area/Wilder Forest - of high quality habitat within the greater Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. These lands have long been identified and prioritized in state, regional and local natural resource plans due to their high biodiversity, connectivity and ability to create corridors for wildlife movement. The property has been listed as a high priority for Washington County's Land and Water Legacy Program since 2006.

The property's natural features speak for themselves as an opportunity not to be missed. The MLCSS classifies the area as having high quality tamarack swamp, oak forest, northern forest, maple basswood forest, aspen birch forest, prairie, grassland and wetlands. The MN DNR's Natural Heritage Database and MCBS contain fourteen records of rare or significant plant communities, and plants and animal species in the area, including Blanding's Turtle, Red Shoulder Hawk and Milk Snake. It encompasses high biodiversity, a corridor for wildlife movement close to the St. Croix River, species of concern, and two lakes (56 acres) with 3.26 miles of shoreline.

Multiple, long-term benefits will be achieved by permanently conserving these strategically selected lands:

- Protection of lands and waters within targeted high-biodiversity focus areas – including along streams, rivers and lakes – that are imminently threatened by fragmentation, degradation or sale
- Creation and protection of corridors of habitat to facilitate connectivity and the movement of wildlife
- Provision and protection of high quality habitat for migrant and resident wildlife species
- Increased resilience of native animal and plant populations (including "Species in Greatest Conservation Need") in the face of climate change and invasive species, due to improved ecosystem connectivity
- Protection of lakes, rivers and streams and improved quality of our ground water
- Increased access to environmental education recreation in the Metro Area where nearly 60 percent of the state's population lives and is projected to increase by 28 percent over the next 30 years
- Education of future MN farmers and educators on use of regenerative organic agricultural practices and creation of sustainable farm businesses that protect high-biodiversity areas

This project creates a unique public-private partnership in addition to the protection of the pristine and important natural environment. Washington County seeks to partner with MFA - who has a long history rooted in educational programming - to appropriately utilize the lands as a classroom for Minnesotans to demonstrate regenerative organic sustainable agriculture, and train citizens on how to manage lands, woods and waterways, to protect the environment, build healthy living models, and create pathways to run farm businesses. This effort will perpetuate protection of the natural environment while producing opportunities for generations to come. This project sets new standards that will help to protect the environment for generations.

Washington County in partnership with MFA will create a long-term acquisition and concept plan for the entire 600+ acres of Amherst H. Wilder Forest parcels. We will continue our extensive community engagement efforts to collaboratively develop a concept and acquisition plan with the broader community for the Wilder Forest parcels that incorporates stakeholder feedback and prioritizes Minnesotans' best long-term interests.

### **III. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:**

**Project Status as of February 1, 2017:**

**Project Status as of July 1, 2017:**

**Project Status as of February 1, 2018:**

**Overall Project Outcomes and Results:**

**IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:**

**ACTIVITY 1:** Washington County will purchase in fee for the purposes of conservation approximately 80 acres of the Carnelian Creek Area/Wilder Forest in the greater Twin City Metro Area and develop a long-term management plan.

**Description:** We will acquire land in fee that will be open to public use. The management unit is yet to be determined. Development of a Square Lake Master Plan is in Washington County’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for completion in 2017 and the selected parcel for application of these funds may fall within those boundaries. The acquisition list of potential parcels under consideration for these funds is attached. Washington County will return to LCCMR for approval of the selected parcel once determined. Unless necessary to protect priority lands and subject to a work plan amendment, Washington County will not use LCCMR funding to acquire structures and related facilities.

Washington County and MFA will work to develop a restoration and management plan consistent with the highest possible ecological and human benefits and will secure funding to implement them. MFA has been managing more than 160 acres of this land since 2005 and is interested in taking on its long-term management.

**Summary Budget Information for Activities:**

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

Outcome	Completion Date
1. <i>Approximately 80 acres of high quality habitat protected through fee title acquisition</i>	6/30/18

**Activity Status as of February 1, 2017:**

**Activity Status as of July 1, 2017:**

**Activity Status as of February 1, 2018:**

**Final Report Summary:**

**V. DISSEMINATION:**

**Description:** Washington County dissemination efforts will be focused on generating media coverage to make the public aware of the purchase and closing on the property.

**Status as of February 1, 2017:**

**Status as of July 1, 2017:**

**Status as of February 1, 2018:**

**Final Report Summary:**

**VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:**

**A. ENRTF Budget Overview:**

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Overview Explanation
Fee Title Acquisition:	\$ 500,000	Approximately 80 acres of Wilder Forest
<b>TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:</b>	<b>\$ 500,000</b>	

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:** N/A

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000:** N/A

**Number of Full-time Equivalents Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation:** N/A

**Number of Full-time Equivalents 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
<b>Non-state</b>			
Various local, federal and private funds	\$ 500,000	\$	Fee title acquisition
<b>State</b>	\$0		
<b>TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:</b>	<b>\$ 500,000</b>	<b>\$</b>	

**VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:**

**A. Project Partners:** Washington County and MFA are working with May Township, the University of Minnesota, Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District, Washington County Conservation District, Minnesota Institute of Sustainable Agriculture, Twin Cities Agricultural Land Trust, Youth Farm, Our Community Foods Project, Main Street Project, Hmong American Partnership and many more partners.

**B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:** This fee title acquisition is part of a larger strategy to protect and preserve 600 acres commonly referred to as the Wilder Forest. These lands are directly adjacent to previously conserved land, and encompass a significant tract of the Carnelian St. Croix Water Way. Every dollar of ENRTF funds spent will be matched at least one to one by nonstate funds. The protection of these lands will result in the following short- and long-term benefits:

- Protection from the pressures of development
- Protection of a high-biodiversity area, including streams and lakes that are imminently threatened by fragmentation, degradation or sale.
- Creation and protection corridors of habitat to facilitate the movement of wildlife
- Protection of high quality habitat for migrant and resident wildlife species
- Increased resilience of native animal and plant populations (including “Species in Greatest Conservation Need”) in the face of climate change and invasive species due to improved ecosystem connectivity
- Protection of lakes and streams and improved quality of our ground and surface waters
- Creation of opportunities for outdoor recreation, wildlife viewing, photography and other experiences for Minnesotans
- Increased access to outdoor recreation and enjoyment in the Metro Area where nearly 60 percent of the state’s population lives and projections show an increase of 28 percent over the next 30 years

- Use of science-based education to protect high-biodiversity areas while educating people how to grow healthy food for our future generations, helping to create healthier communities.

**C. Funding History:**

Funding Source and Use of Funds	Funding Timeframe	\$ Amount
The Amherst H. Wilder’s divestment portfolio consists of three phases. The divestment of phase I included sale of approximately 330 northernmost Wilder Forest acres over 9 parcels in fall of 2014 to the Manitou Fund. This land has been added to Warner Nature Center’s holdings and officially included in their conditional use permit. Wilder’s phase two and three divestment plan includes all 600+ acres under consideration for siting of a parcel for purchase through this proposal.	Phase I sale occurred in fall of 2014.	No public funds involved.

**VIII. FEE TITLE ACQUISITION/CONSERVATION EASEMENT/RESTORATION REQUIREMENTS:**

**A. Parcel List:** Carnelian Creek Area/Wilder Forest

**B. Acquisition/Restoration Information:**

**Fee Title Acquisition**

**1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.**

Washington County has identified the property since 2006 as a high priority for its own Land and Water Legacy Program funding, and in 2012 identified the property as one of the county’s top ten priority areas to be protected. The property was identified by the Metro Conservation Corridors Partnership as a key corridor with science-based classifications and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping. The large size of the property controlled by a single owner, its close proximity to the metropolitan area, combined with age and high quality natural habitat, and the fact that it has been identified as a habitat corridor with many protected species, were all factors in the selection process.

**2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified. Include a link to the plan if one is available.**

- Tomorrow’s Habitat for the Wild and Rare <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/cwcs/index.html>
- Minnesota DNR Scientific and Natural Area’s Long Range Plan <http://dnr.state.mn.us/strategies/index.html>
- Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/conservationagenda/index.html>
- Washington County Land and Water Legacy Program Conservation Priorities (and top 10 conservation priorities) <https://www.co.washington.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/132>  
And <https://www.co.washington.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/771>
- Minnesota DNR Nongame Outdoor Recreation Plan <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/reports/scorp/index.html>
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Strategic Habitat Conservation Model <http://www.fws.gov/landscape-conservation/>

3. **For any parcels acquired in fee title, a restoration and management must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.**

Washington County will be the long-term fee title owner. A restoration and management plan consistent with the highest quality conservation and ecological goals for the site will be completed and developed. Funding will be identified and/or sought for creation and long-term implementation of the management plan. MFA and Washington County will keep copies of records and reporting of the plans including costs and outcomes. The plan will require a yearly evaluation and review.

4. **For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.**

Washington County Board approval will be obtained prior to acquisition.

5. **If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction.**

If required, Washington County shall obtain written permission from the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources prior to acquiring property.

**IX. VISUAL COMPONENT or MAP(S):** See attached map

**X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM:** N/A

**XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted no later than February 2017, July 2017, February 2018. A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2018.

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
M.L. 2016 Project Budget**



**Project Title:** *Wilder Forest Acquisition*

**Legal Citation:** *Fill in post-2016 legislative session.*

**Project Manager:** June Mathiowetz

**Organization:** Washington County

**M.L. 2016 ENRTF Appropriation:** \$ 500,000

**Project Length and Completion Date:** 2 Years, June 30, 2018

**Date of Report:** January 19, 2016

<b>ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET</b>	<b>Activity 1 Budget</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Activity 1 Balance</b>	<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>TOTAL BALANCE</b>
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>	<i>Protection of fee title land</i>				
<b>Acquisition</b>					
<i>Estimate of 80 acres of high quality habitat</i>	\$500,000	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2016 Proposed Acquisition/Restoration List**

**Project Title:** Wilder Forest Acquisition for Conservation, Preservation and Education  
**Project Manager Name:** June Mathiowetz  
**Organization:** Washington County  
**ENRTF \$ Request:** \$6.5M

#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	PID Number	Geographic Coordinates Format: [Deg.]° [Min.]' [Sec.]" [Hemis.]		Estimated Cost	County	Ecological Significance	Activity Description	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner*	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)*
			Latitude	Longitude								
1	MFA and Mackey	14.031.20.31.0002	45°10'16"	92°48'33"	\$ 4,636,000.00	Washington	Prairie, Forested, Cropland	Fee Title Acquisition	264.02	0.35	TBD	TBD
2	Village 1	22.031.20.11.0001	45°9'55"	92°49'2"	\$ 1,370,000.00	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	30.56	0.53	TBD	TBD
3	Village 2	23.031.20.22.0001	45°9'55"	92°48'45"	\$ -	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	38.43		TBD	TBD
4	Upper Mays 1	15.031.20.33.000	45°10'8"	92°49'57"	\$ 2,750,000.00	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	38.24	0.11	TBD	TBD
5	Upper Mays 2	15.031.20.34.0001	45°10'8"	92°49'43"	\$ -	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	47.98	0.81	TBD	TBD
6	Lower Mays 1	22.031.20.21.0001	45°9'55"	92°49'41"	\$ -	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	34.64	0.72	TBD	TBD
7	Lower Mays 2	22.031.20.13.0001	45°9'45"	92°49'24"	\$ -	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	16.66	0.38	TBD	TBD
8	South Mays Schoolhouse	22.031.20.14.0001	45°9'44"	92°49'3"	\$ 840,000.00	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	30.17	0.17	TBD	TBD
9	Square Lake Access	23.031.20.23.0001	45°9'42"	92°48'45"	\$ 937,000.00	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	38.22	0.09	TBD	TBD
	Hackman 1	14.031.20.14.0001	45°10'33"	92°47'49"	\$ -	Washington	Prairie, Forested, Cropland	Fee Title Acquisition	39.6	0	TBD	TBD
	Hackman 2	14.031.20.13.0006	45°10'33"	92°48'3"	\$ -	Washington	Prairie, Forested, Cropland	Fee Title Acquisition	18.8	0	TBD	TBD
	Mays Lake				\$ -	Washington	Lake		25		TBD	TBD
	Clear Lake				\$ -	Washington	Lake		31		TBD	TBD
	Totals				\$ 10,533,000.00				538.92	3.16		

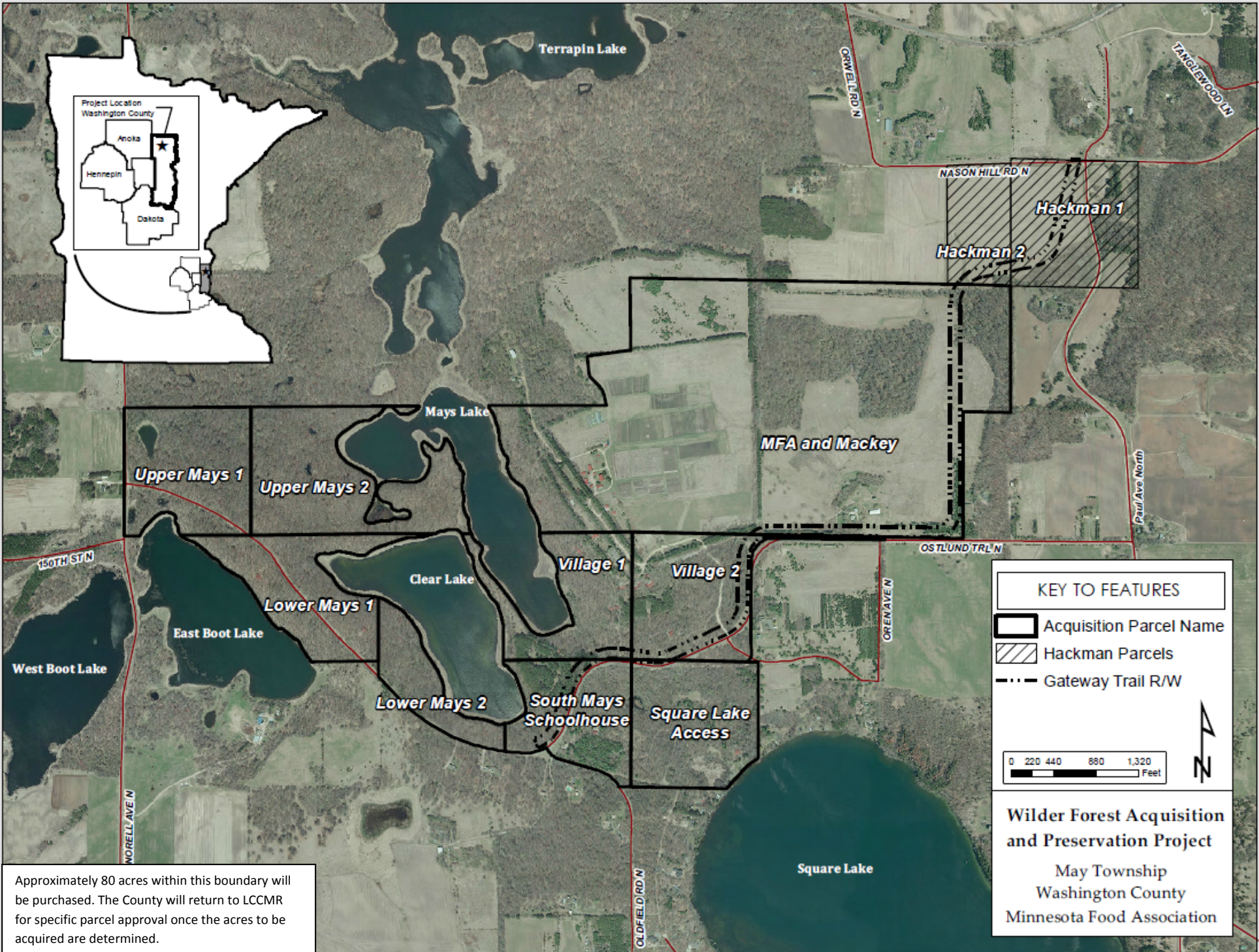
**NOTES:** \*For purposes relevant to this proposal, approximately 80 acres of the parcels listed here (excluding the Hackman parcels due to an existing easement previously paid for with ENRTF dollars) will go under Washington County ownership. Funding sources and ownership of the other parcels is to be determined.

- 1) Estimated Cost Column Note: The MFA and Mackey parcels above are combined, Village 1 and 2 are combined, and Upper and Lower Mays 1 and 2 are combined.
- 2) # of Acres Column Note: Lake areas are not included in Total. Total acres including the lakes and Hackman parcels is 653.3 acres.
- 3) Best management practice is for all the available parcels be owned and managed together; MFA is pursuing other funding sources to acquire Hackman Parcels.
- 4) The County will return to LCCMR for specific parcel approval once the acres to be acquired are determined.

594.92 Total Acres Plus Mays and Clear Lakes  
597.32 Total Acres Plus Hackman Parcels Only  
653.32 Total Acres with Lakes and Hackman parcels

ACRES OF AND COVER TYPES (not including Hackman parcels):	
173	Agricultural and grassland
206	Mesic oak forest
50	Pine plantation
2	Hardwood swamp
21	Maple-Basswood forest
6	Oak woodland-brushland
70	Developed areas and Roads
3	Alder shrub swamp
2	Emergent marsh
2	Poor fen and marsh
1	Wet meadow
3	Wetland
539	Total Acres





Approximately 80 acres within this boundary will be purchased. The County will return to LCCMR for specific parcel approval once the acres to be acquired are determined.

**KEY TO FEATURES**

- Acquisition Parcel Name
- Hackman Parcels
- Gateway Trail R/W

0 220 440 880 1,320 Feet

**Wilder Forest Acquisition and Preservation Project**  
 May Township  
 Washington County  
 Minnesota Food Association

