



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2019 Work Plan

Date of Report: October 18, 2018

Date of Next Status Update Report: January 31, 2020

Date of Work Plan Approval: June 5, 2019

Project Completion Date: June 30, 2024

Does this submission include an amendment request?

PROJECT TITLE: Preserving the Avon Hills with Reverse-Bidding Easements

Project Manager: John Geissler

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Location: Stearns County. The target area is approximately 65,000 acres in parts of the following townships: Albany, Avon, Brockway, Collegeville, Farming, LeSauk, Rockville, St. Joseph, St. Wendel, and Wakefield

Total ENRTF Project Budget:

ENRTF Appropriation: \$1,600,000

Amount Spent: \$0

Balance: \$1,600,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09j

Appropriation Language:

\$1,600,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Saint John's University in cooperation with Minnesota Land Trust to restore and enhance protected lands, provide public outreach, and prepare management plans for and use a reverse-bid ranking system to secure permanent conservation easements on high-quality natural habitat in the Avon Hills area of Stearns County. Of this amount, up to \$168,000 is for use by Minnesota Land Trust in a monitoring fund as approved in the work plan and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 116P.20. An annual financial report is required for any monitoring, management, and enforcement fund, including expenditures from the fund. A proposed list of acquisitions and restorations must be provided in the work plan. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2024, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

I. PROJECT TITLE: Preserving the Avon Hills with Reverse-Bidding Easements

II. PROJECT STATEMENT:

Use the MMAPLE reverse-bid and conservation easement ranking system to protect 390 acres and restore/enhance 220 acres of priority private lands. MMAPLE's proven novel method uses precision conservation and a market-based approach to assure the best easement value for the ENRTF.

The Avon Hills area is a 65,000 acre unique natural landscape located in Stearns County just 15 miles west of St. Cloud. The landscape is glacial moraine that rises out of the surrounding farmland; it contains the highest concentration of native plant communities in the county, including oak and maple-basswood forests, tamarack and mixed-hardwood swamps, and wet meadows. It harbors rare species, including American ginseng, cerulean warbler, red-shouldered hawk, Blanding's turtle, and least darter. The area has been identified as ecologically significant by The Nature Conservancy's Eco-Regional Plan and the MN DNR's County Biological Survey. Our landscape goal is to permanently protect 70% of the remaining undeveloped landscape, or about 25,000 acres over the next 20 years. The USF&WS, the MN DNR and others have invested in protection efforts, signaling the priority for protection. With the assistance of the ENRTF and conservation minded landowners, 6,242 acres of the Avon Hills are protected (over 25% of our ambitious goal).

Using ENRTF grants, the Avon Hills team developed and have proven the effectiveness of this novel ranking system for acquiring easements dubbed the Minnesota Multi-faceted Approach for Prioritizing Land Easements (MMAPLE). In the latest round of MMAPLE, the \$2086 /acre average payment represents just 52% of the estimated market value of undeveloped land. MMAPLE emphasizes the best easement value for the ENRTF.

In addition, we intend to invest in community outreach and education to ensure that local decision makers, landowners, and others understand the importance of the Avon Hills landscape and the options that exist for its protection. Finally, we will ensure that the land eligible for conservation easements will be managed effectively by supporting the development of habitat management plans for targeted parcels and supporting enhancement/restoration work on existing easements.

III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of January 31, 2020:

Project Status as of July 30, 2020:

Project Status as of January 31, 2021:

Project Status as of July 30, 2021:

Project Status as of January 31, 2022:

Project Status as of July 30, 2022:

Project Status as of January 31, 2023:

Project Status as of July 30, 2023:

Project Status as of January 31, 2024:

Overall Project Outcomes and Results:

ACTIVITY 1: Complete 390 acres of Conservation Easements using MMAPLE Ranking and Reverse Bidding system.

Description:

Help landowners permanently protect land through the use of conservation easements. Saint John's University (SJU) will partner with the Minnesota Land Trust (MLT). SJU will work with experts to "fine-tune" the MMAPLE system and then focus on landowner outreach, the reverse-bid process, and ranking using MMAPLE. SJU will subcontract with Stearns SWCD to perform landowner outreach and engagement including the following: a) landowner identification and outreach, b) site assessments and GIS mapping, c) scoring of properties using MMAPLE, (d) assisting with organizing a sealed bid session(s) for participating landowners. Ranking of the bids received will be led by SJU and assisted by Stearns SWCD and MLT. MLT will use the ranked parcels to negotiate easements; prepare documents including easements and baseline reports; secure appraisals, title work, and mapping; and conduct long-term easement monitoring and enforcement. The MMAPLE system will prioritize quality woodlands and wetlands and no more than 20% of any easement may be agricultural land. No irrigated lands will be allowed in the easement.

The selection of the successful landowners follows the reverse-bid process, so specific parcels will be described and submitted to LCCMR after the bidding. Landowners with completed easements will receive a base payment of \$30,000 plus their MMAPLE per acre bid.

Justification for the Minnesota Land Trust's proposed travel budget request is as follows. This is an estimate based on a total of 3-7 completed easements for approximately 390 acres. Costs are based on the Land Trust's 2018 cost analysis with some adjustments made for future projections and inflation in years 2019-2024. These costs anticipate working on a minimum of 6 potential projects to get to the completed number. It also anticipates working on this grant for 5 years.

There are essentially four separate site visits that occur as an easement acquisition moves from a potential easement project to a finalized, recorded conservation easement. There is an initial site visit for assessment and engagement purposes. This is followed by a visit to meet with the landowners to run through the easement documents. Another site visit is necessary for baseline documentation. A final visit occurs upon closing of the easement, when the easement document is recorded. These visits are necessary parts of the easement acquisition process. As the project develops and is determined to not be an eventual easement acquisition it is likely that only several of these visits occur.

On average a round-trip visit to the Avon Hills area is approximately 200 miles. MLT assumes 12 potential easement projects are in play from the onset.

12 initial site visits @ 200 miles/site	= 2400 miles
24 visits for easement documentation @ 200 miles/site	= 4800 miles
12 visits for baseline documentation @ 200 miles/site	= 2400 miles
6 visits for recording and closing on easement @ 200 miles/site	= 1200 miles

Total = **10,800 miles**

4,800 miles @ current Federal mileage reimbursement	= \$5,886
	Rounded to \$6,000

To the extent possible MLT tries to bunch up site visits to minimize the amount of trips. MLT also tries to utilize rental car options as these are more cost effective than MLT employees using their personal vehicles to conduct site visits, or meet with landowners. However, this is not always possible. Also, inevitably during the easement acquisition process there are unexpected site visits that occur to complete the acquisition.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 1,192,000

Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$ 1,192,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Protect approximately 390 acres completing permanent conservation easements for 3-7 landowners to be held by the MN Land Trust. SJU, Stearns County SWCD, and MLT will promote program, contact landowners, implement the MMAPLE reverse-bidding system, and complete all legal components of conservation easement projects, including assurance of long-term monitoring and enforcement. Payments for easements to landowners will be based on their bids. This will result in the expansion of existing protected areas and will protect working forests, ecological diversity, wildlife habitat, and water quality. (est. \$720,000 from ENRTF budget.)	June 30, 2022
2. Provide habitat restoration management plans prepared by private sector natural resource professionals. (est. \$36,000 from ENRTF budget.)	April 30, 2022
3. Fund long-term stewardship costs. MLT stewardship costs of \$24,000 per easement. (\$168,000 from ENRTF budget.)	June 30, 2022

Activity Status as of January 31, 2020:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2020:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2021:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2021:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2022:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2022:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2023:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2023:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2024:

Final Report Summary:

ACTIVITY 2: Avon Hills Community Education and Outreach

Description: Facilitate communication among landowners, environmental groups, local units of government, and others within the Avon Hills community to promote land-use education, land protection, understanding of ecological principles, and land stewardship.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 2:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 32,500

Amount Spent: \$ 0

Balance: \$ 32,500

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Increase awareness of the Avon Hills landscape and increase land stewardship by hosting annual conferences and/or other events to provide environmental education and promote community involvement.	June 30, 2024

Activity Status as of January 31, 2020:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2020:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2021:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2021:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2022:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2022:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2023:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2023:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2024:

Final Report Summary:

ACTIVITY 3: Easement Site Restoration & Enhancement on 220 acres

Description: Based on property quality, restoration will be conducted to enhance water and habitat benefits on eased sites. The projects will reconnect fragmented habitat complexes by restoring native vegetation, and enhance existing natural habitat on eased lands through activities such as invasive species removal, prescribed burning, and oak regeneration. These habitat restoration and enhancement activities will benefit species of greatest conservation need such as; red-shouldered hawk, Blanding's turtle, and four-toed salamander and pollinators such as bumblebees and yellow swallowtail butterflies. Additional funding for restoration assistance on eased lands is concurrently being requested by this partnership from federal funding sources.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 3:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 375,500

Amount Spent: \$ 0

Balance: \$ 375,500

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Restoration/Enhancement projects selected and designed	June 2022
2. Restoration/Enhancement projects completed on 220 acres	June 2024

Activity Status as of January 31, 2020:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2020:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2021:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2021:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2022:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2022:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2023:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2023:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2024:

Final Report Summary:

IV. DISSEMINATION:

Description: The work and results of this project will be shared in a number of ways including direct outreach to landowners, press releases distributed by Saint John's, Stearns County SWCD, or the Minnesota Land Trust, print and electronic publications of the partners, and through the local media. The Avon Hills website will be a central location for information: <http://www.csbsju.edu/outdooru/avonhillsinitiative>. Finally, we will continue to share results of the MMAPLE method with interested partners as we believe it is a model that could be used more broadly.

The Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) will be acknowledged through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the [ENRTF Acknowledgement Guidelines](#).

Activity Status as of January 31, 2020:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2020:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2021:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2021:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2022:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2022:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2023:

Activity Status as of July 30, 2023:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2024:

Final Report Summary:

V. ADDITIONAL BUDGET INFORMATION

A. ENRTF Budget Overview: See provided budget sheet.

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: Saint John's University is not a public employer and does not have "classified" staff whose salaries are being shifted from an existing public account to this ENRTF public funding. Saint John's University would not undertake this project without this additional funding and will hire additional staff or contract or modify/expand the duties of existing staff to complete this project.

Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation:

SJU – 0.80 FTE total (approx. 0.16/year).

Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation:

Habitat Restoration Plan Preparer – approx. 0.02 FTE/yr.

MLT staff 1.6 FTE total (approx. 0.33 FTE/year).

Appraiser – approx. 0.02 FTE/yr.

Surveyor – approx. 0.01 FTE/yr.

Stearns SWCD -- approx. 0.08 FTE/yr.

B. Other Funds:

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
Non-state			
We anticipate a minimum landowner donation of 20% of the appraised easement values for the overall project. Actual amounts will depend upon the outcomes of the bidding process.	\$150,000	\$ 0	Landowners will essentially match LCCMR funds by reducing the total easement cost by donating part of the easement value.
State			
	\$ 0	\$	
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:	\$150,000	\$0	

VI. Project Partners

Saint John's Outdoor University: John Geissler, Kyle Rauch, Sarah Gainey, Jenny Kutter, Jeremy Scegura and staff - Coordinating education and outreach, conferences, workshops, grant management, and budgeting

Stearns County Soil & Water Conservation District: Nate Hylla, Jason Selvog - Meeting and outreach with landowners, managing bidding process for easements.

Minnesota Land Trust: Nick Bancks, and staff -Providing easement education, coordinating bidding process, meeting with landowners, developing easement documents, monitoring and enforcing easements, lead on restoration/enhancement effort.

Avon Hills Initiative: local landowners, citizens, volunteers- Working with Saint John's, Stearns County SWCD, and MN Land Trust to achieve project goals.

VII. Long-Term- Implementation and Funding:

The past ENRTF supported phases (ML 2008-03d, ML 2013-04j, ML 2016-09c) have opened up a new avenue of conservation easement prioritizing using MMAPLE and reverse-bidding. ENRTF funding of MMAPLE has allowed for innovation that is now being promoted statewide and even nationally. In addition to doing another 390 acres of permanent easements and 220 acres of restoration/enhancement in the Avon Hills, the funding will promote MMAPLE as a cost-saving easement prioritization method as a potential tool for the common circumstances found in the Avon Hills and across the state. We are 25% of the way to achieving our ambitious landscape goal to permanently protect 70% of the remaining undeveloped landscape, or about 25,000 acres over the next 20 years.

VIII. Reporting Requirements

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted no later than January 31, 2020, July 30, 2020, January 31, 2021, July 30, 2021, January 31, 2022, July 30, 2022, January 31, 2023, July 30, 2023, and January 31, 2024. A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2024. All elements of this proposal will be completed by June 30, 2024, and likely sooner for the easements.

IX. Additional Work Plan Components

A. Budget spreadsheet - see attached.

B. Visual Component or map – see attached

C. Parcel List: Parcels will be identified using the MMAPLE process. Once identified and prioritized, these parcels will be brought to the LCCMR on this list for approval.

D. ACQUISITION/CONSERVATION EASEMENT/RESTORATION REQUIREMENTS:

- 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.**

Using ENRTF grants, the Avon Hills team developed and have three times proven the effectiveness of this novel ranking system for acquiring easements dubbed the Minnesota Multi-faceted Approach for Prioritizing Land Easements (MMAPLE). Under this system, each property is given an Environmental Benefits Score based on available data about its ecological qualities (e.g., shoreline, biodiversity, adjacency to protected properties). For properties meeting the minimum environmental threshold, MMAPLE uses a market-based approach that asks landowners to submit a sealed bid for the lowest price they will accept for a conservation easement. Those properties with the best ratio of environmental benefits to easement cost become the priority for acquisition. In the latest round of MMAPLE, the \$2086 /acre average payment represents just 52% of the estimated market value of undeveloped land.

MMAPLE is a good approach for combining ecological and economic factors in a reasonably simple ranking system. MMAPLE emphasizes the best easement value for the ENRTF. Also, landowner payment of the easements' stewardship costs meets a goal of LCCMR and the State Auditor.

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.**

Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, 2008. Parcels not identified, but priorities are identified. http://www.lccmr.leg.mn/documents/scpp/scpp_final_plan_v2.html#

Stearns County Comprehensive Plan – Avon Hills Overlay District. 2008 Chapter 3

<http://www.co.stearns.mn.us/Environment/LandUseandSubdivision/ComprehensivePlanning>

3. **For any conservation easement acquired, 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.**

A Habitat Management Plan (HMP) is created by a trained ecologist or other natural resource professional for each acquired easement. This HMP is comprised of a general property description, ecological classification, landowner goals, landscape goals, native plant community summary, and stand inventories. Management objectives and recommendations by plant community, as well as a suggested timeline for proposed management activities are also included in the plan. The HMP is subject to an approval process by Land Trust staff and then included with the easement document in the Land Trust's files as a guide for current and long-term management of the property. All management activities, if undertaken, are the responsibility of the individual landowners, who must follow the prescriptions of the HMP. Financing for long-term maintenance and management is the responsibility of the landowner, but other state-, federal- and other funding sources may be available.

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.**

N/A

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. A copy of the written approval should be provided to LCCMR.**

The Minnesota Land Trust will request, at least 10 days prior to closing, and obtain written approval by the DNR Commissioner for easement acquisitions under this grant.

6. **Provide a statement addressing how conservation easements will address specific water quality protection activities, such as keeping water on the landscape, reducing nutrient and contaminant loading, protecting groundwater, and not permitting artificial hydrological modifications.**

The Minnesota Land Trust takes great care in protecting the natural resources, inclusive of surface and ground waters, that underpin each of its conservation easements. Our standard conservation easement template contains fifteen (15) different provisions that specifically afford protection to surface and groundwater resources.

Beyond this, each easement is individually drafted to meet the unique features of the property and affords substantial protection to its water resources. Land uses that may impact water quality – including residential, agricultural, industrial or commercial uses – are significantly curtailed or eliminated. In turn this will help keep water in the landscape, eliminate adverse hydrological modifications, and reduce pollutant nutrient and

contamination loading. In order to enroll, all properties within the ENRTF-funded Avon Hills program must possess >80% natural habitat cover (e.g., forest, wetlands) that afford greatest protection for both biotic and water resources over time; these habitats are further protected in perpetuity through the crafting of easements. No irrigated lands will be allowed in the easements.

Moreover, the project partners (St. John's University and Minnesota Land Trust) have strategically incorporated water quality issues in its MMAPLE project selection criteria. Conservation easements acquired through the Avon Hills program are targeted toward high-quality natural habitats; those projects that rank the highest include riparian and wetland in addition to forest habitat. Moreover, projects are assessed as to how they contribute to the goals of local comprehensive plans, water plans, State conservation strategies, or other documented public policies which have identified water quality objectives related to the property. Therefore, we are selecting projects which are contributing positively to the health of surface and ground waters and including these features as part of the project's stated public benefits.

Finally, Minnesota Land Trust believes that easement language is only a first step towards effective perpetual conservation. Our easement program includes annual monitoring of all properties, working with landowners to understand and comply with the terms of their easements, effective record keeping, and swift enforcement when necessary. These efforts have contributed to our accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

7. Describe the long-term monitoring and enforcement program for conservation easements acquired on parcels by your organization, including explanations of the process used for calculating conservation easement monitoring and enforcements costs, the process used for annual inspection and reporting on monitoring and enforcement activities, and the process used to ensure perpetual funding and implementation of monitoring and enforcement activities.

Land protected through conservation easements will be sustained through the Minnesota Land Trust's state-of-the-art standards and practices for conservation easement stewardship. The Minnesota Land Trust is a nationally-accredited land trust with a very successful stewardship program that includes annual property monitoring, effective records management, addressing inquiries and interpretations, tracking changes in ownership, investigating potential violations and defending the easement in case of a true violation.

It is the policy of the Minnesota Land Trust to monitor each property protected by a conservation easement once a year – and more frequently if necessary. It is our goal to prevent easement violations; frequent contact with the land and the landowner helps us achieve that goal. Monitoring is typically done in person by a Land Trust staff or certified volunteer monitor walking the protected property.

It is the policy of the Minnesota Land Trust to hold and enforce its conservation easements as written. The organization is prepared to correct violations of easement terms and to legally defend and enforce its easements when necessary. The MLT calculates the costs associated with each easement through an extensive costs analysis which is updated periodically and shared with LCCMR staff. Factors that lead to the overall cost include location of the property, size, and breadth or reserved rights.

Prior to completing any easements under this work plan, the Minnesota Land Trust will work with LCCMR staff to develop appropriate easement language incorporating the State of Minnesota's conservation easement enforcement rights as required by this appropriation.

E. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: N/A

MMAPE Method (Minnesota Multi-faceted Approach for Prioritizing Land Easements)									
Avon Hills Area Conservation Easement Bid Worksheet									
Formulas updated 30 March 2017 by T. Kroll									
Landowner Code Name:	Example	(Make up a name or code that will be used to identify your property.)							
Date prepared:	30-Mar-17								
Environmental Benefits Points	Environmental Weighting Factor	Units Affected	Enter your actual data in the blocks with the blue and green colors to determine Environmental Benefits Points. Blue is determined by the landowner. Green is determined by the land features in the easement. Purple are calculations. Orange = total Environmental Benefits Points. Red = Conservation Value Rating.						
(EBP= weighting factor x units)									
Size of Property (based on tax statement acres)									
			0 Total acres owned by applicant contiguous to this proposed easement. (For information only)						
0	10 +		0 Acres to be protected by an easement, not including any house site acres within the easement area.						
			0 Acres of this proposed easement plus those acres outside the easement that would fall within a full "40" or Gov. Lot						
			(i.e. 75 acres in easement + 5 homestead acres = 80 acres. Include only those acres owned by applicant.)						
0	10 +		0 Total contiguous easement acres or largest block if not all acres are contiguous						
Special Natural & Cultural Resources to be Protected by the Easement (count only those acres covered by the easement)									
0	250		0 Acres of Outstanding Quality DNR Sites of Biodiversity Significance (SOBS) (Rounded up to nearest 5 acres)						
0	150		0 Acres of High Quality DNR Sites of Biodiversity Significance (SOBS) (Rounded up to nearest 5 acres)						
0	75		0 Acres of Moderate Quality DNR Sites of Biodiversity Significance (SOBS) (Rounded up to nearest 5 acres)						
0	1		0 Feet of Shoreline on "public waters" (streams, lakes+ wetlands>10 ac) from the Public Water Inventory Map (round up to nearest 10)						
0	1+		0 Feet of the longest contiguous section of shoreline on "public waters" for each lake on which the survey is "meandered." (round up to nearest 10)						
0	100		0 Acres which are designated as a source of public drinking water or aquifer recharge area.						
0	1		0 Feet of protected property boundary which is adjacent to a designated scenic road, river, trail, or other designated scenic feature.						
0	30		0 # of documented sites of historical or cultural significance which will be protected.						
Open Space /Working Forest /Working Ag to be Protected by the Easement (count only those acres covered by the easement)									
0	10 +		0 Acres to be used for working forest, prairie, preserved forest, savanna, or wetland. (Not intended for agriculture, pasturing, or horticulture.)						
0	5		0 Acres to be allowed for use as agriculture, pasturing, or horticulture.						
0	5		0 Acres for which a current land management plan exists. (i.e. Forest Stewardship Plan or NRCS Farm Plan)						
Location of the Property to be Protected (count only those acres covered by the easement)									
0	100		0 Acres on which unrestricted public access will be allowed.						
0	2		0 Feet of protected property boundary which is adjacent to either public land or other permanently protected land.						
0	10 +		0 Acres which are inside some kind of specially designated conservation protection area. (Township, county conservation overlay district)						
Building Allotments to be Extinguished, or Retained for Future Use, or are Already Used by the Applicant (within next full "40")									
(Include building areas inside the easement area plus those controlled by the applicant outside the easement that would fall within the next largest full "40" or Gov. Lot.)									
		A 40	Current property zoning. Examples A5, T20, A40 - Check with zoning board.						
		1	Total number of building allotments (used or unused) that are assigned by zoning. (Often 1 per 40 acres. Check with zoning board.)						
		1	Number of building allotments already used or to be retained from above. (Include any existing homesteads you own.)						
0	2000		0 Number of building allotments to be extinguished within the proposed easement area.						
		1	Clustering: How many unconnected areas will contain building sites? Clustered building sites that have adjoining boundaries are counted as 1 area.						
	Enter 1 above		Boundaries of individual building sites must adjoin on the longest or second longest side to be counted as one cluster.						
		1	How many separate legal easement document sets need to be created? (Multiple bidders or current/future land splits require separate easements.)						
		\$0	\$/acre charge to rating for multiple easements. THIS FEE IS NOT CHARGED TO BIDDER. But it costs program \$15,000 per extra easement.)						
0	SUB-TOTAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS POINTS								
Deductions (if any) for Not Extinguishing all Building Allotments (100% protection = no deductions)									
#DIV/0!	= sub-total of Env	#DIV/0!	Percent of land in the easement compared to the next highest "full 40" or government lot. (Protection > 80% has no deductions.)						
#DIV/0!	=(.35+ %): above	0%	Percent of total allotments to be extinguished. (Must be >65% for full credit.)						
#DIV/0!	0%	0	Acres of protected land per homestead or developed cluster. Must exceed 75 acres for 100%. 160+ acres = max of 130%.						
Final Calculations and Examples									
#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	Hand calculate your bid below.						
\$2,000	\$1,000	\$500	#DIV/0! (A) =Your Total Environmental Benefits points						
#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	\$ per acre (B) = \$ per acre you want to be paid for the easement.						
#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0! FYI ONLY - \$/acre needed to pay off \$20,000 MLT fee.						
#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	(D) = Your Conservation Value Rating = (A) * (B)						
0	0	0	Conservation Value Rating = Environmental Benefits Points / (Your bid per acre for the easement + Admin Fee)						
#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	0 (E) = Total acres you are protecting with an easement.						
#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	\$ (F) =Total \$ you could receive if accepted. (F)=(B x E)						
Maximum Bids must not exceed the lesser of 1) the appraised value of the rights extinguished by the easement or 2) the % of ATAMV from below.									
			Albany	Avon	Collegeville	Farming	St. Joseph	St. Wendel	Wakefield
2016 Assessors Township Average Market Value (ATAMV) per acre (weighted for ag & timber, no homesteads)			\$4,325	\$3,919	\$4,360	\$4,046	\$4,054	\$3,981	\$4,674
>= 500 Total Environmental Benefit Points = Minimum to participate	#DIV/0!								
< 1,000 Environmental Benefit Points = Payment NTE 20% of ATAMV nor NTE appraised value of easement.	#DIV/0!		\$865	\$784	\$872	\$809	\$811	\$796	\$935
< 3,000 Environmental Benefit Points = Payment NTE 30% of ATAMV nor NTE appraised value of easement.	#DIV/0!		\$1,298	\$1,176	\$1,308	\$1,214	\$1,216	\$1,194	\$1,402
< 5,000 Environmental Benefit Points = Payment NTE 40% of ATAMV nor NTE appraised value of easement.	#DIV/0!		\$1,730	\$1,568	\$1,744	\$1,618	\$1,622	\$1,592	\$1,870
< 10,000 Environmental Benefit Points = Payment NTE 50% of ATAMV nor NTE appraised value of easement.	#DIV/0!		\$2,163	\$1,960	\$2,180	\$2,023	\$2,027	\$1,991	\$2,337
< 15,000 Environmental Benefit Points = Payment NTE 60% of ATAMV nor NTE appraised value of easement.	#DIV/0!		\$2,595	\$2,351	\$2,616	\$2,428	\$2,432	\$2,389	\$2,804
< 20,000 Environmental Benefit Points = Payment NTE 70% of ATAMV nor NTE appraised value of easement.	#DIV/0!		\$3,028	\$2,743	\$3,052	\$2,832	\$2,838	\$2,787	\$3,272
>= 20,000 Environmental Benefit Points = Payment NTE 80% of ATAMV nor NTE appraised value of easement.	#DIV/0!		\$3,460	\$3,135	\$3,488	\$3,237	\$3,243	\$3,185	\$3,739

Attachment A:

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2019 Budget Spreadsheet

Legal Citation: M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09j

Project Manager: John Geissler

Project Title: Preserving the Avon Hills with Reverse-Bidding Easements

Organization: Saint John's University

Project Budget: \$1,600,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 5 Years, June 30, 2024

Today's Date:



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Budget	Amount Spent	Balance
BUDGET ITEM			
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)	\$ 25,500	\$ -	\$ 25,500
John Geissler- Project Manager,\$10,500 (71% salary, 29% benefits), 2% FTE.			
Jenny Kutter, Arboretum Office Coord.,\$4,000 (71% salary, 29% benefits)2% FTE:			
Kyle Rauch, Arboretum Educ. Staff, \$5,000 (71% salary, 29% benefits) 2% FTE			
Sarah Gainey, Arboretum Educ. Staff, \$1,000 (71% salary, 29% benefits), 0.5% FTE:			
TBD, Arboretum Educ Staff, \$2,000 (71% salary, 29% benefits) 1% FTE			
Jeremy Segura, SJU Accountant, \$3,000 (71% salary, 29% benefits) 0.5% FTE			
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts	\$ 503,884	\$ -	\$ 503,884
Conference speakers: speaker fees and honoraria for landowner educational conferences and workshops.	\$ 2,000		
Professional Services subcontract with Stearns County SWCD for general outreach, personal landowner contacts, site evaluation and mapping, scoring using MMAPLE, assisting with the bidding process, and assisting with the bid ranking.	\$ 25,000		
Easement Restoration/Enhancement: Includes restoration and enhancement costs on 220 acres of Avon Hills easement land through contracts with USFWS, MN DNR, NPOs and private restoration firms (e.g. Great River Greening, area forestry consultants)	\$ 310,000		
Professional Services for Restoration: Includes mapping costs to build geodatabase and track projects	\$ 4,000		
Professional Services subcontract with MLT: Staff expenses including salaries plus eligible benefits and related costs for approximately 55% FTE for each of the 3 years as follows: Conservation directors or other land protection/restoration staff (approximately 40% FTE/yr), legal staff and other support staff (approximately 15% FTE/yr) plus mileage and related travel expenses in Minnesota. Estimated at 10,800 miles for easement acquisition and 5500 miles for restoration/enhancement projects at the current IRS rate (\$0.545 per mile)	\$ 162,884		
Equipment/Tools/Supplies	\$ 14,116	\$ -	\$ 14,116
Promotion of easements, conferences, & workshops (newspaper ads, etc.), conference brochures and	\$ 14,116		
Easement Acquisition	\$ 924,000	\$ -	\$ 924,000
Includes purchase price of conservation easements to protect about 390 acres of land through permanent conservation easements held by the Minnesota Land Trust. Includes . MMAPLE will be	\$ 720,000		
Long-term stewardship costs of \$168,000 (\$24,000 per easement for 7 projects)	\$ 168,000		
Habitat management plan contract costs of \$36,000 (6 projects @ \$6,000 per plan + 1 donated by	\$ 36,000		
Professional Services for Acquisition	\$ 132,500		\$ 132,500
Professional Services for Acquisition: Includes appraisal costs of \$56,000 (8 @ \$7,000 each) and survey costs of \$40,000 (8 @ \$5,000 each), title review and closing costs of \$24,000 (8 @ \$3,000 each), mineral report cost of \$2,500 (1 @ \$2,500 each), and mapping costs of \$10,000 (10 @ \$1,000 each).	\$ 132,500		
Travel expenses in Minnesota	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
COLUMN TOTAL	\$ 1,600,000	\$ -	\$ 1,600,000

OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT	Status (secured or pending)	Budget	Spent	Balance
Non-State: We anticipate a minimum landowner donation of 20% of the appraised easement values for the overall project. Actual amounts will depend on the outcomes of the bidding process.	Pending based on each bid	\$150,000-\$500,000	\$ -	\$150,000-\$500,000
State:	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
In kind: Saint John's inkind: overhead (computer, office space, phones, etc.); volunteer hours and mileage (conferences and landowner outreach)	Secured	\$ 11,000	\$ -	\$ 11,000

PAST AND CURRENT ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS	Amount legally obligated but not yet spent	Budget	Spent	Balance
Current appropriation: \$1,300,000 - ENRTF for ML 2016-09c Conservation Easements in Avon Hills - Phase III - Remaining unspent funds are directly tied to paying landowners for their easements and to MLT for completing the easements. The workplan listing the eligible landowners was approved on 16 April 2018. MLT is now processing the landowners who will get the easements. Total spent is from July 30, 2018 update. All funding will from phase III will be spent by June 30, 2019		\$ 1,300,000	\$ 55,684	\$ 1,244,316
Past appropriations: \$337,000 - ENRTF for ML 2008-03d Preserving the Avon Hills Landscape; \$772,000 - ENRTF for ML 2013-04j Preserving the Avon Hills Landscape - Phase II		\$ 1,109,000	\$ 1,109,000	\$ -

