



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

M.L. 2020 ENRTF Work Plan (Main Document)

Today's Date: December 8, 2019

Date of Next Status Update Report: February 15, 2021

Date of Work Plan Approval:

Project Completion Date: June 30, 2023

Does this submission include an amendment request? __

PROJECT TITLE: Mentoring the Next Generation of Conservation Professionals

Project Manager: Deborah Loon

Organization: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.

College, Department, or Division: NA

Mailing Address: 3815 East American Boulevard

City, State, Zip Code: Bloomington, MN 55425

Project Manager Direct Telephone Number: 612-801-1935

Email Address: dloon@mnvalleytrust.org

Web Address: www.mnvalleytrust.org

Location: Metro Region; Central & Southeast Regions -- Blue Earth, LeSueur, Nicollet, Rice, Sibley, Steele, Waseca Counties

Total Project Budget: \$500,000

Amount Spent: \$0

Balance: \$500,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2020, Chp. xx, Sec. xx, Subd. xx

Appropriation Language:

PROJECT STATEMENT:

With this grant, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), its Wetland Management District (District) and the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust (Trust) will build an extensive program of internship and apprenticeship opportunities on the Refuge and District. We will engage a diversity of young people in paid positions to work side-by-side with and learn from United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) professionals and other local conservation partners. Students will design and deliver environmental education programs, plan and co-lead wildlife interpretive and nature-based activities, assist USFWS personnel with habitat restoration and enhancement projects, conduct biological surveys, improve visitor facilities, and explore conservation-related career options. Some of the participants will experience outdoor activities like fishing, paddling, orienteering, camping and hunting for the first time. Activities will occur on the Refuge and District, as well as in the urban community through the Refuge's Urban Outreach Program.

These internships and apprenticeships will introduce 32 young people over two years to careers in the conservation field. There will be 18 positions each year. The 3 apprenticeships will be set up as 2-year positions, while the internships will run 8 to 50 weeks. This experience will enable the participants to compete for post-secondary education and employment opportunities, including within the federal government. In addition, their 40,320 hours of service will improve the habitat conditions of over 700 485 acres of prairie, wetland and forest, and introduce thousands of children to the wonders of the natural world through environmental education and nature-based activities.

To ensure we can attract a diversity of young people to these opportunities, all positions will be paid, with the wage ranging from \$13.00 to \$18.00/hour (weighted average of \$15.11/hour). Workers compensation insurance coverage will be provided, along with transportation assistance and free housing, as needed. Positions with terms longer than 6 months will be provided paid time off, offered health and dental insurance and offered an employer matching contribution to a retirement plan.

The Refuge is a valuable, but under-utilized resource in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The Refuge's 14,000 acres stretch from urban to rural along nearly 70 miles of the Minnesota River. Its floodplain forest, river, lakes, prairies, oak savannas and wetlands provide critical habitat for a diversity of waterfowl and other migratory birds, fish, and resident wildlife. In addition, the Wetland Management District managed by the Refuge, is a 14-county district that manages more than 8,000 acres of land critically important to migrating, breeding and nesting waterfowl, as well as grassland birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and other creatures.

The Refuge and District offer vast opportunities for Twin Cities residents to connect with wildlife, learn about their habitats and enjoy wildlife-related recreation. As one of only 14 priority urban wildlife refuges in the 568 National Wildlife Refuge System, this Refuge is charged with engaging the next generation of diverse youth who, for a variety of reasons, are not connected to outdoors and nature. This is critical to ensuring a future constituency passionate about protecting our environment and public lands, as well as encouraging youth to consider conservation careers.

Given its location, size and varied habitats, the Refuge and District are able to serve as a learning laboratory and training site for future conservationists, natural resource biologists and environmental educators. Currently, this is done through a handful of unpaid internships every year. However, with the rising costs of a college education and intransigent economic disparities, many students cannot afford to take on unpaid internships. This is especially true for young people of color and low-income. Students need to take jobs outside of their chosen field to pay for college or even help support their families. Without good internships, they do not gain the experience needed. This grant program will attract students with diverse backgrounds, introduce them to the conservation field and provide mentorship and job skills to these future resource professionals.

II. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

First Update February 15, 2021

Second Update August 15, 2021

Third Update February 15, 2022

Fourth Update August 15, 2022

Fifth Update February 15, 2023

Final Report August 15, 2023

III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

This project is designed to be over two years, however some of the positions will carry into the third state fiscal year (FY23). All positions will be located at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District. They will be hosted (employed) by the Minnesota Valley Trust. Office space, equipment, training, transportation and supervision will be provided by the Refuge and District.

Activity 1 Title: Apprenticeships and Internships on the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District

Description: The Minnesota Valley Trust will host 3 full-time, 24-month apprenticeships at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, as well as 33 full-time internships lasting 8 to 50 weeks at the Refuge and Wetland Management District. The positions will be as follows:

Refuge Urban Outreach Apprenticeship -- 1 full-time, 24-month position for a recent college graduate. This apprentice will work with the Refuge's Urban Outreach Manager to develop and present engaging outreach programs to urban youth and families both on the Refuge and in the urban community, develop new partnerships to reach urban youth, and attend community events and festivals to engage urban audiences in nature-based activities. (4,160 hours total)

Refuge Visitor Services Apprenticeship -- 1 full-time apprenticeship for 24 months for a recent college graduate. This position will work with the Refuge's Visitor Services Manager to increase visitor trips to and experiences on the Refuge through strategic communications and marketing, visitor engagement and events planning. (4,160 hours total)

Refuge Biology Apprenticeship -- 1 full-time 24-month apprenticeship for a recent college graduate. This apprentice will work with the Refuge's Wildlife Biologist to build skills in habitat enhancement and biological monitoring, engage with visitors to the Refuge, and learn how to balance needs of wildlife and visitors on the Refuge. (4,160 hours total)

Refuge Teaching Practicum Internships -- 4 full-time positions for 50 weeks each year over 2 years (September – mid-August) for pre-service elementary educators and natural resource professionals interested in further developing their understanding of environmental education and broadening their teaching skill set. The interns will learn from USFWS professionals and deliver quality educational programs to over 8,000 children, teachers and families who visit the Refuge from schools throughout the Twin Cities area. (16,000 hours total)

Refuge Urban Outreach Summer Internships -- 6 fulltime summer internships for 8 weeks and 4 fulltime summer internships for 14 weeks (5 total each year for 2 years) for high school and college students

from under-represented communities in the Twin Cities urban core. Interns will plan and co-lead nature-based education and recreation programs on the Refuge and in the community, co-staff information booths and activities at community festivals, and participate in career discovery across the Refuge. Students are recruited by partners, including StepUp Achieve (Minneapolis), Right Track (St. Paul), Hispanic Access Foundation and SEAK / Wolf Ridge ELC. (4,160 hours total)

Refuge Summer Intern Coordinator -- 1 full-time position for 14 weeks each year for 2 years in the summer to plan and coordinate the Urban Refuge Student Summer Internship program. This position will be filled by a young professional with experience supporting and leading a diversity of young people. It will serve as a mentor and guide to the interns to ensure a high-quality experience for them, encourage conservation career exploration and help solve any challenges students may have. (1,120 hours total)

Refuge and District Biology Summer Internships -- 4 full-time internships for 14 weeks each year for 2 years in the summer for high school students, college students or recent college graduates pursuing a career in natural resources. Interns will work with USFWS biologists to do plant and bird surveys, invasive species removal and mapping, water level monitoring and management, public education, pollinator surveys, habitat assessments and restoration, boundary posting, mowing and seeding. (4,480 hours total)

District Biology Internship -- 1 full-time internship for 6 months each year for 2 years (June through November) for a college student or recent college graduate. This position will work with FWS biologists on habitat plans and restoration activities on wetlands and prairies on Waterfowl Production Areas and private lands. (2,240 hours total)

ACTIVITY 1 ENRTF BUDGET: \$500,000

Outcomes	Completion Date
1. Refuge Urban Outreach Apprenticeship – 1 apprentice connects 2,500 urban youth / year with nature-based activities (5,000 youth over 2 years)	June 30, 2023
2. Refuge Visitor Services Apprenticeship – 1 apprentice delivers strategic marketing and communications, visitor engagement and events planning to increase public awareness of the Refuge and drive 20% more visitors to experience the Refuge and engage in nature-based activities	June 30, 2023
3. Refuge Biology Apprenticeship—1 apprentice gets experience and builds skills in biological monitoring, habitat plan design and restoration activities, assists with restoration and enhancement of at least 250 170 acres of Refuge habitat and learns how to balance habitat and wildlife needs with public access.	June 30, 2023
4. Refuge Teaching Practicum Internships – 4 interns / year (8 total) deliver environmental education and lead nature-based activities to 8,000 students / year (16,000 students over 2 years)	June 30, 2023
5. Refuge Urban Outreach Summer Internships – 5 high school interns / year (10 total) schedule, plan and co-lead nature-based education and recreation programs at the Refuge and in the community, and participate in career discovery across Refuge programs	June 30, 2023
6. Refuge Summer Intern Coordinator – 1 coordinator mentors and guides 5 interns each summer for 2 years (10 interns over 2 years)	June 30, 2023
7. Refuge and District Biology Summer Internships – 4 interns / year (8 total) gain natural resources management experience through plant and animal surveys, water monitoring, habitat assessments, invasive species removal and mapping, boundary postings and more on at least 80 acres of Refuge and District habitat	June 30, 2023
8. District Biology Internship – 1 intern / year (2 total) gets experience and build skills in habitat plan design and restoration activities and assists with restoration and enhancement of at least 350 235 acres of wetlands and prairies	June 30, 2023

First Update February 15, 2021

Second Update August 15, 2021

Third Update February 15, 2022

Fourth Update August 15, 2022

Fifth Update February 15, 2023

Final Report August 15, 2023

IV. DISSEMINATION:

Description: The Minnesota Valley Trust and Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge will publicize the activities and impacts of this project through owned and partner websites, social media platforms and media relations efforts. 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](#).

First Update February 15, 2021

Second Update August 15, 2021

Third Update February 15, 2022

Fourth Update August 15, 2022

Fifth Update February 15, 2023

Final Report August 15, 2023

V. ADDITIONAL BUDGET INFORMATION:

A. Personnel and Capital Expenditures

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000: NA

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: NA

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

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: 40,320 Hours	Divide total personnel hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: 9.7 FTE
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Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation: 0

Enter Total Estimated Contract Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: NA	Divide total contract hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: NA
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VI. PROJECT PARTNERS:

- A. Partners outside of project manager's organization receiving ENRTF funding - NA
- B. Partners outside of project manager's organization NOT receiving ENRTF funding – Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District (USFWS), Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends, USFWS Region 3 Division of Refuges Youth Internship Program, Hispanic Access Foundation, StepUp Achieve (Minneapolis), Right Track (St. Paul), Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center, Twin Cities area high schools, colleges and universities, and an expanding pool of nonprofit partners working with low-income students in education and career exploration.

VII. LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING: The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust and Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge are committed to maintaining this expanded internship and apprenticeship program for the long-term. Future funding will be sought through philanthropic efforts with foundations, corporations, civic organizations and individuals by the Trust and Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends, as well as through other state and federal source of funds (e.g., workforce grant programs). We may return to the LCCMR for some funding in the future to leverage other funds so that the program can be maintained and even expanded.

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

- Project status update reports will be submitted February 15 and August 15 each year of the project
- A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2023

IX. SEE ADDITIONAL WORK PLAN COMPONENTS:

- A. Budget Spreadsheet
- B. Visual Component or Map
- C. Parcel List Spreadsheet - NA
- D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements - NA
- E. Research Addendum - NA

Attachment A: Project Budget Spreadsheet
 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
 M.L. 2020 Budget Spreadsheet

Legal Citation:

Project Manager: Deborah Loon, Executive Director

Project Title: Mentoring the Next Generation of Conservation Professionals

Organization: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.

Project Budget: \$500,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 3 years, end June 30, 2023

Today's Date: December 8, 2019

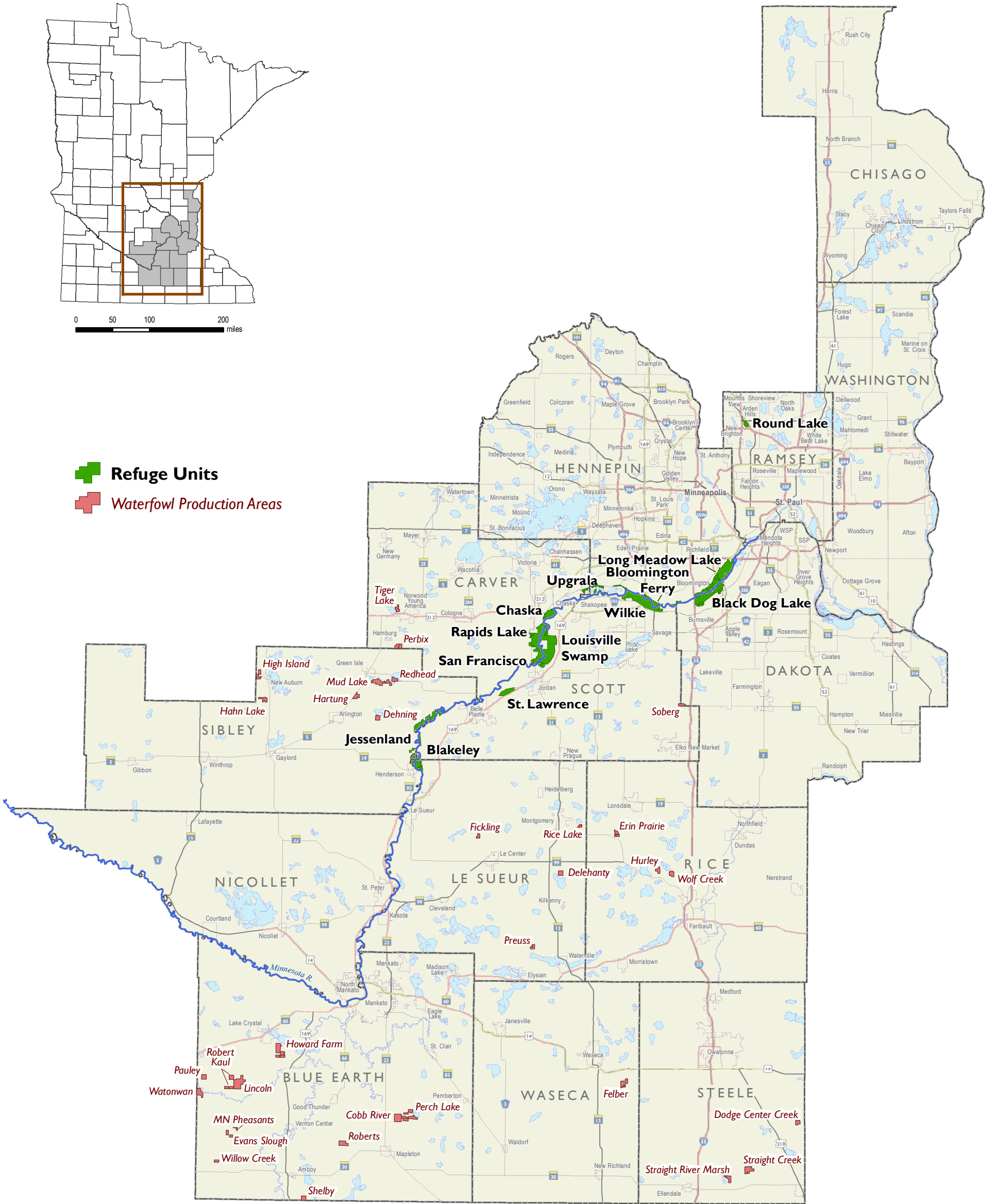


ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET		Budget	Amount Spent	Balance
BUDGET ITEM				
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)		\$ 500,000	\$ -	\$ 500,000
Refuge Urban Outreach Apprenticeship - 1 full-time apprenticeship for a college student or recent graduate in the Refuge's Urban Outreach program to assist with outreach to urban youth and delivering engaging programming on the Refuge and in the community to connect youth with nature. 1.0 FTE position for 24 months located at MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge, \$16/hour year 1 & \$16.50/hour year 2, paid time off, worker's compensation, health and dental insurance and retirement matching contribution offered.				
Refuge Visitor Services Apprenticeship - 1 full-time apprenticeship for recent college graduate to increase public use of the Refuge through strategic communications. 1.0 FTE for 24 months. Located at the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge. \$16/hour year 1 & \$16.50/hour year 2, paid time off, worker's compensation insurance, health and dental insurance and retirement matching contribution offered.				
Refuge Biology Apprenticeship - 1 full-time apprenticeship to gain skills in biological monitoring, habitat plan design and restoration activities, assist with restoration and enhancement of 250 acres of Refuge habitat and learn how to balance habitat and wildlife needs with public access. 1 FTE for 24 months located at the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge. \$16/hour year 1 & \$16.50/hour year 2, paid time off, worker's compensation insurance, health and dental insurance and retirement matching contribution offered.				
Refuge Teaching Practicum Internships - 4 full-time internships each year for college students or recent graduates to assist Refuge in delivering its environmental education and urban outreach programs. 4.00 FTE for 50 weeks (September to mid-August) at 2 years. Located at the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge. \$15/hour year 1 & \$15.50/hour year 2, paid time off, worker's compensation, health and dental insurance and retirement matching contribution offered.				
Refuge Summer Intern Coordinator - 1 position for a professional with experience guiding youth to coordinate and mentor the cohort of summer interns. 1.0 FTE for 14 weeks (May - August) at 2 years. Located at the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge. \$18/hour year 1 & \$18.50/hour year 2, worker's compensation insurance, no other benefits.				
Refuge Urban Outreach Summer Internships - 5 interns each year. Matched through partner programs (e.g., Achieve Mpls, Hispanic Access Foundation, Right Track St. Paul, Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center). 4.0 FTEs for 8 weeks (mid-June to mid-August) & 2.0 FTEs for 14 weeks (mid-May through August). Wage of \$13/hour year 1 & \$13.50/hour year 2, worker's compensation insurance, no other benefits.				
Refuge & District Summer Biology Internships - 4 internships each year for high school or college students pursuing a degree and career in natural resources field to assist the Refuge Biology team with species surveys, habitat enhancement work, public access facilities work. 4.0 FTE for 14 weeks (late May - August) at 2 years. Located at the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge. \$13/hour year 1 & \$13.50/hour year 2, worker's compensation insurance, no other benefits.				
District Biology Internship - 1 full-time internship each year for 6 months to gain skills in habitat plan design and restoration activities and assist with restoration and enhancement of 350 acres of wetlands and prairies. 1 FTE for 6 months at 2 years. Located at the Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District. \$13/hour year 1 & \$13.50/hour year 2, worker's compensation insurance, health and dental insurance and retirement matching contribution offered.				
COLUMN TOTAL		\$ 500,000	\$ -	\$ 500,000
SOURCE AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT	Status (secured or pending)	Budget	Spent	Balance
Non-State: MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. - 16% of wages & taxes, 100% of wages for positions that start prior to 7/1/20, 100% of worker's compensation insurance premiums. Benefits offered for positions lasting over 6 months - 80% of health insurance premium, 50% of dental insurance premium, 3% matching contribution to retirement plan.	Secured	\$ 196,570	\$ -	\$ 196,570
USFWS - Region 3 Division of Refuges Youth Internship Program - Financial support for wages of 1 Urban Summer Intern and 1 Refuge Biology Intern	Secured	\$ 22,680	\$ -	\$ 22,680
State: N/A			\$ -	\$ -
In kind: USFWS - MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge & Wetland Management District -- Office space, equipment, local travel, supplies. (In-kind value for supervision of interns by USFWS personnel not calculated and included.)	Secured	\$ 60,928	\$ -	\$ 60,928
Other ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS AWARDED IN THE LAST SIX YEARS	Amount legally obligated but not yet spent	Budget	Spent	Balance
Metro Conservation Corridors VII, ML2013		\$ 400,000	\$ 246,800	\$ 153,200
Metro Conservation Corridors VIII, ML2015		\$ 500,000	\$ -	\$ 500,000



Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
Bloomington, Minnesota

Wetland Management District



MATT MILLETT
UPDATED 6/2018
SOURCES: MVNWR, MVT, MN DNR, USGS, MET COUNCIL
UTM ZONE 15N (NAD83)

