

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund 2009 Phase 1 Request for Proposals (RFP)

LCCMR ID: B14.14

Project Title: HCP - Shallow Lake Easements (3c)

Total Project Budget: \$ \$400,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: July 2009 - June 2010 (1 yr)

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 400,000

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Region:	County Name:	City / Township:
Statewide	Statewide	

Summary: DU will help private landowners protect their shoreline on shallow lakes important to waterfowl by negotiating and securing permanent conservation easements that limit subdivision and development on 400 acres.

Main Proposal: 0808-1-058-proposal-DU HCP Phase VI Part 3C Proposal.doc

Project Budget: 0808-1-058-budget-DU HCP Phase VI Part 3C Project Budget.xls

Qualifications: 0808-1-058-qualifications-DU Manager Qualifications & Organization Description.doc

Map: 0808-1-058-maps-Map DU 2009 HCP 3C.jpg

Letter of Resolution: 0808-1-058-resolution-DU Board Authorization Letter LCCMR 2008.pdf

MAIN PROPOSAL

**PROJECT TITLE: Shallow Lake Easements, Ducks Unlimited Living Lakes
Minnesota's Habitat Conservation Partnership Phase VI, 3c
www.mnhabitatcorridors.org**

I. PROJECT STATEMENT:

The mission of the Habitat Conservation Partnership is to restore, enhance and conserve habitat for the purpose of sustaining fish, wildlife and plant communities for all generations. Minnesota's Habitat Conservation Partnership (Partnership), formerly the Habitat Corridors Partnership, was formed in 2000 to provide a framework for statewide land conservation in partnership with the Environmental Trust Fund. The work of the Partnership has three main objectives: 1) **Partnership:** working together to accelerate existing programs and identify new opportunities that build upon our existing investments in habitat. 2) **Focus:** The Phase V proposal will work in nine project areas encompassing 27,442 mi². All work proposed will occur within the identified project areas. These areas were identified as focus areas where resource conservation priorities and opportunity overlap 3) **Leverage:** the objective of this partnership is to bring more resources to bear on Minnesota's conservation need by identifying non-state contributions to accelerate habitat conservation by maximizing the results from limited funding through the Environmental Trust Fund.

Ducks Unlimited (DU) works in a focused, strategic approach to assess, improve and protect the aquatic ecology and water quality of key shallow lakes for waterfowl and other wildlife in partnership with Minnesota DNR's shallow lakes program (HCP part 2d) under our "Living Lakes" initiative. Whereas DU will enhance shallow lake water quality and aquatic ecology under HCP part 2c, DU will work to permanently protect shallow lake shorelines and lakesheds using perpetual DU conservation easements in HCP part 3c. DU land protection staff biologists will work with at least 4 private landowners on managed shallow lakes to negotiate new easement options, and will purchase or secure the donation of one or more permanent conservation easements on 400 acres of shoreland or lake outlet tracts. DU will work with private landowners to protect sensitive shallow lake shoreland on managed basins with improved water quality and wetland ecology (aquatic plants and invertebrates) to protect the state's investment in management time and infrastructure. These may include both prairie shallow lakes and forested wild rice lakes managed for wildlife by the Minnesota DNR in all HCP Project Areas. Grant funds will be used to pay for DU professional staff time to promote conservation easements to landowners and negotiate terms and conditions of individual easements (due diligence), appraisals, title clearance and other legal services, boundary surveys, baseline condition documentation reports, for DU staff time to administer this grant, and for the cost of future annual stewardship and monitoring of permanent conservation easements secured through this grant. The use of LCCMR ETF grant funds by DU for future stewardship of permanent conservation easements was approved in DU's 2005 LCCMR grant work program, which included significant detail on how these funds will be managed and spent over time by DU and DU's affiliate Wetlands America Trust.

Trust funds needed for annual easement monitoring and stewardship will be calculated for each easement using the DU easement endowment worksheet table (previously appended and approved for use by LCCMR staff in 2005 grant to DU) which captures all anticipated expenditures for easement monitoring and stewardship. Estimated stewardship costs will vary due to variation in size and location of easements, complexity in land configuration, condition, and habitat types, and the terms and conditions outlined in the easement. Stewardship funds will be managed in a separate WAT easement stewardship account according to the DU Board's investment policy. Trust funds for easement monitoring and stewardship will be received by DU National Headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee, and will be immediately transferred to the WAT endowment account. The stewardship money will be held in a restricted endowment to be used only for future easement monitoring and landowner stewardship. Furthermore, the restricted endowment will be invested according to the policies set forth in DU and WAT's Investment Policy as described in the May 31,

2005 letter from DU Controller Bob Mims to former LCCMR Director John Velin. DU costs to monitor easements and steward landowners will be billed to specific easement projects annually, and funds to cover this expense will be made available from the WAT easement endowment to the DU regional office budget to cover these annual costs. Copies of the most recent WAT audited financial statements are available for LCCMR staff review at any time upon their request.

DU considers the enforcement and defense of the terms and conditions of the conservation easement as an operational cost, and DU understands that this obligation may require the additional expenditure of DU funds to enforce the terms of the easement. WAT adopted the *Land Trust Standards and Practices* published by the Land Trust Alliance in 2004 on April 23, 2005 as technical guidelines for the organization's operation. DU has further outlined conservation easement stewardship management and enforcement procedures for DU staff in a land protection handbook. Annual reports on easement monitoring and management will be provided to LCCMR.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: Shallow Lake Easements

Budget: \$400,000

Description: DU will provide technical assistance and outreach to (1) secure one new purchased or donated conservation easement on 400 acres, (2) negotiate 4 new potential easements for future acquisition, and (3) provide stewardship for new easements secured through this grant.

Deliverables	Completion Date
1. Secure One or More New Permanent Conservation Easement (400 acres)	June 2010
2. Technical Assistance & Outreach for New Future Easements (4 landowners)	June 2010
3. Future Stewardship for New Permanent Conservation Easements Secured	June 2010

III. PROJECT STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

A. Project Partners

This proposal is part of the Habitat Conservation Partnership Phase VI Proposal. Please see the main proposal for a complete list of partners involved. In addition to the partners listed therein, DU works very closely with Minnesota DNR Shallow Lakes Program and Wildlife field staff, Pheasants Forever, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). DU works very closely with and assists the DNR Shallow Lakes Program, which coordinates both pre and post enhancement project assessments to monitor and evaluate shallow lake condition and management results, impacts of upland land use and invasive fish, and develops management plans to guide agency use of lake management water control structures and fish barriers. It is on these shallow lakes that DU is working to protect shoreline and associated shoreland. Meanwhile, DU also works with USDA's NRCS to enroll willing shallow lake shoreline landowners in the Wetlands Reserve Program to help restore degraded upland lake sheds.

B. Project Impact

DU will help DNR protect at least 400 acres of shoreland on one or more key shallow lakes that are open to public use and recreation, and are of special importance to migratory wetland birds.

C. Time We propose a twelve month grant beginning July 1, 2009 and ending on June 30, 2010.

D. Long-Term Strategy

DU will annually monitor and enforce the terms of easements secured through this grant, and will provide annual stewardship to landowners. DU will continue pursuing additional easements around these lakes until all private land with development potential has been permanently protected.

Project Budget

Habitat Conservation Partnership, Phase 6 Part 3C
Shallow Lake Easements, Ducks Unlimited Living Lakes Initiative

IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>% FTE</u>
Personnel: DU Land Protection Staff (multiple staff)	\$ 150,000	100%
Personnel: Conservation Program Manager	\$ 10,000	10%
Contracts:		
Equipment/Tools:	\$ -	
Acquisition (Including Easements):	\$ 200,000	
Restoration:	\$ -	
Other: Stewardship for annual easement monitoring	\$ 40,000	
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$ 400,000	

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Remaining \$ From Previous Trust Fund Appropriation (if applicable): Only \$150,000, DU's 2008 LCCMR grant for HCP Phase 5 Part 3C, remains unobligated as of 8/25/2008, however, DU has 2 easements pending that we anticipate completing in September 2008. Thus, effectively, DU's remaining fund balance for conservation easements will be \$0 by October 2008.	\$ 150,000	ETF funds appropriated in Habitat Conservation Partnership (HCP) Phase V (2008) to be spent prior to July 1, 2009
Other Non-State \$ Being Leveraged During Project Period: At least \$200,000 of other non-state, federal grant funds from the US Fish & Wildlife Service North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant program will be spent, or similar amounts in land value donated by private landowners.	\$ 400,000	DU has committed \$400,000 to be expended through HCP Phase VI.
Other State \$ Being Spent During Project Period:	\$ -	No other state fund expense anticipated.
In-kind Services During Project Period:	\$ -	HCP does not encourage this
Past Spending:	\$ 350,000	HCP Phases IV & V

As Conservation Program Manager for Ducks Unlimited in Minnesota since 1999, Jon Schneider is responsible for all public grant management, partner coordination, and conservation program implementation to support Ducks Unlimited's Living Lakes Initiative. This involves significant project and program level coordination with agency partners and field staff, DU field biologists and engineers, DU land protection staff, and both DU support staff and administrators. Jon has been responsible for the development and management of DU's Minnesota conservation budgets totaling over \$2 million annually, and has administered four LCCMR grants, six North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant, and multiple smaller DNR grants for individual projects since 1999. Jon is a Certified Wildlife Biologist and Professional Wetlands Scientist, and holds a B.S. degree in Business Administration & Biology from the State University of New York College at Oswego and an M.S. degree in Range & Wildlife Management from Texas A&M University.

The mission of Ducks Unlimited is to conserve, restore, and manage wetlands and associated habitats for North American's waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people. The continental vision of Ducks Unlimited is wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow, and forever. In Minnesota and Iowa, Ducks Unlimited is strategically focused on the conservation of shallow lakes through our "Living Lakes" conservation initiative. The vision of DU's Living Lakes Initiative is to establish stepping stones of perpetually protected and managed shallow lake complexes from southern Iowa through northern Minnesota to provide high quality wetland food and habitat resources for waterfowl. The initiative will help preserve this region's rich waterfowling heritage and support conservation of the primary source of its birds, the prairie breeding grounds. Since its founding in 1937, DU has raised more than \$1.6 billion, which has contributed to the conservation of more than 11 million acres of prime wildlife habitat in all 50 states, each of the Canadian provinces, and in key areas of Mexico. In the U.S. Alone, DU has helped to conserve more than 2 million acres of waterfowl habitat. Some 900 species of wildlife live and flourish on DU projects, including many threatened or endangered species. DU conservation staff based in Minnesota work from home offices, and are supported by the Great Plains Regional Office staff in Bismarck, ND, and by DU National Office staff in Memphis, TN.

Ducks Unlimited Conservation Easements LCCMR Phase VI Project Lakes

