

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

LCCMR ID: B14.15

Project Title: HCP - Wetlands Reserve Program (3d)

Total Project Budget: \$ \$580,000

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 4,000,000

First Name: Jon

Last Name: Schneider

Sponsoring Organization: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Address: 311 East Lake Geneva Road NE
Alexandria MN 56308

Telephone Number: 320-762-9916

Email: jschneider@ducks.org

Fax: 320-759-1567

Web Address: www.ducks.org

Region:

County Name:

City / Township:

Statewide

Statewide

Summary: DU will hire contract technicians to assist NRCS with promoting and restoring WRP by securing new applications from landowners, developing restoration plans, and restoring previous WRP easements on 3,000 acres.

Main Proposal: 0808-1-052-proposal-DU HCP Phase VI Part 3D WRP Proposal.doc

Project Budget: 0808-1-052-budget-DU HCP Phase VI Part 3D WRP Project Budget.xls

Qualifications: 0808-1-052-qualifications-DU Manager Qualifications & Organization Description.doc

Map: 0808-1-052-maps-lcmr_2008_easements.pdf

Letter of Resolution: 0808-1-052-resolution-DU Board Authorization Letter LCCMR 2008.pdf

MAIN PROPOSAL

**PROJECT TITLE: Wetlands Reserve Program, Ducks Unlimited & USDA NRCS
Minnesota's Habitat Conservation Partnership Phase VI, 3d
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.

In partnership with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), DU will provide technical assistance (TA) to help deliver the federal Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) through contracted field technicians to help secure new WRP easements. This state-funded TA will make it possible for NRCS to perpetually protect 3,000 acres of wetlands, shallow lakes, and associated upland wildlife habitat around shallow lakes in prairie Habitat Conservation Partnership (HCP) project areas at an estimated "Other Fund" cost of \$4,000,000 to NRCS. These restored wetlands and native prairie grasslands will significantly improve existing blocks of habitat and will improve downstream water quality. Grant funds will be used by DU to contract with multiple wetland restoration technicians, provide supplemental contract or DU staff engineering services to NRCS, and for DU staff costs to administer this grant partnership (hire and supervise the contract techs).

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: Wetlands Reserve Program

Budget: \$580,000

Description: DU will use ETF funding to contract with multiple wetland restoration contract technicians in Crookston, Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls, Morris, Glenwood, St. Peter, Albert Lea, and other locations within HCP project areas to provide technical assistance (TA) to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and private landowners to help NRCS secure 3,000 acres of Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) easements in HCP habitat corridor areas. ETF funds will also be used for DU staff to hire and supervise contractors and administer this partnership. WRP promotion will target restorable wetlands and drained shallow lakes, especially those within priority shallow lake watersheds comprising emphasis areas of DU's Living Lakes Initiative. The contract technicians will help landowners apply for the WRP, and help guide the planning and restoration of lands accepted into the WRP. TA activities will include landowner contacts, WRP applications submitted, restoration plans submitted, wetland restoration designs, and restoration project oversight, all of which are critical steps to securing easements. The USDA's NRCS will fund the associated easement and restoration costs. The contract technicians will implement all aspects of the WRP program that will result in lands being enrolled and wetlands and uplands restored under the federal WRP in HCP Project Areas #1 (Aspen Parklands), 3/6/7 (Prairie Forest Transition), 9 (Des Moines River Valley), 10 (Southern Lakes), and 11 (Prairie Coteau). DU will coordinate the partnership and administer wetland restoration tech contracts, and grant administration and partnership coordination with NRCS, with grant funds. NRCS will pay for all WRP easements with federal funds, and will provide easement and engineering oversight.

Deliverables**Completion Date**

1. Technical assistance (TA) to help NRCS secure WRP Easements on 3,000 acres. TA activities will include landowner contacts, WRP applications submitted, easement restoration plans submitted, wetland restoration designs, and restoration project management.

June 2010

2. WRP easement secured on 3,000 acres Technical Assistance

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 and NRCS will work especially closely to implement this unique partnership, with DU spending grant funds to employ technicians and NRCS spending federal funds to secure WRP easements and restore lands under easement. In addition, DU works very closely with Minnesota DNR Shallow Lakes Program and Wildlife field staff, Pheasants Forever, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS). DU's work is tied very closely to 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, including working 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 and NRCS will partner to protect and restore 3,000 acres of prairie wetlands and associated uplands, including the lakesheds of key shallow lakes wherever possible. These restored and protected lands will help improve and protect water quality and wildlife habitat in and around shallow lakes throughout the southern and western portion of Minnesota in HCP project areas, often in relatively close proximity to human communities. Importantly, these restored and protected lands will provide important wetland/upland complexes for multiple wildlife species, especially migratory birds that include both game and non-game species. This work helps address the prairie and wetland restoration strategies of the Statewide Conservation Plan, and the goals of the DNR's Duck Recovery Plan.

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

D. Long-Term Strategy

NRCS will annually monitor and enforce the terms of easements enrolled in the WRP, and will provide annual stewardship to landowners. DU will continue promoting additional WRP easements around previously enrolled lands and shallow lakes that DU and DNR are enhancing and managing.

Project Budget

Habitat Conservation Partnership, Phase 6 Part 3D
Wetlands Reserve Program, Ducks Unlimited & USDA NRCS

IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>% FTE</u>
Personnel: DU Land Protection Regional Biologist	\$ 20,000	20%
Personnel: Conservation Program Manager	\$ 10,000	10%
Contracts: Contracted Wetland & Engineering Technicians	\$ 550,000	
Equipment/Tools:	\$ -	
Acquisition (Including Easements):		
Restoration:	\$ -	
Other:		
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$ 580,000	

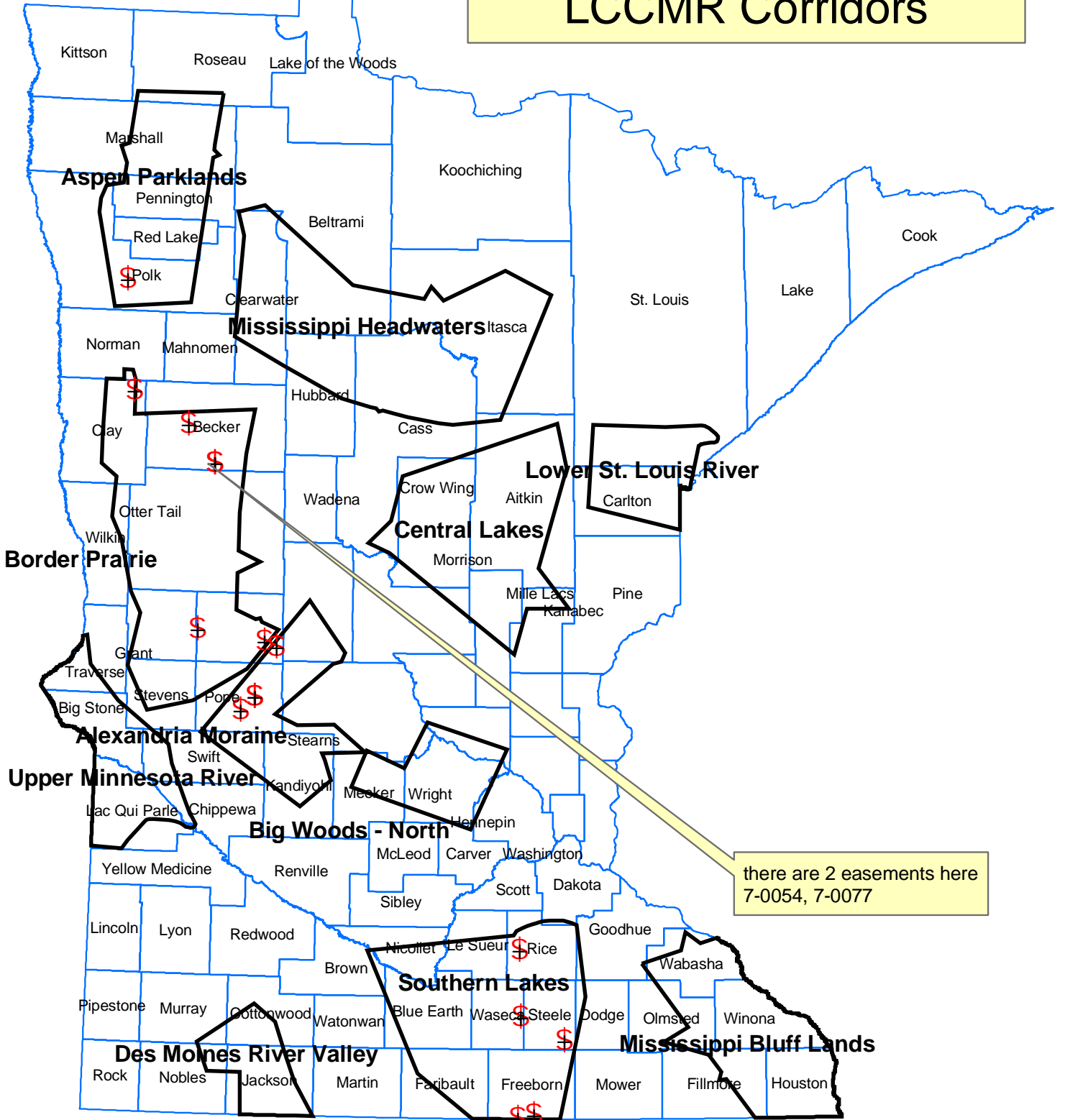
V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Remaining \$ From Previous Trust Fund Appropriation (if applicable): DU currently has multiple contracted technicians under contract through June 2009, effectively obligating all existing 2007 and 2008 grant funds.	\$ -	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: USDA's NRCS estimates that approximately \$4,000,000 in federal WRP funds will be spent on WRP easements and restorations during the grant period. These funds are contingent upon new WRP applications being secured and WRP easement land restorations being designed and implemented by DU contract technicians, thus they are effectively being leveraged by LCCMR grant funds.	\$ 4,000,000	Pending federal funds available for WRP easements and restorations.
Other State \$ Being Spent During Project Period:	\$ -	No other state fund expense anticipated.
In-kind Services During Project Period:	\$ -	HCP does not encourage this HCP Phases IV & V
Past Spending:	\$ 617,500	

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.

2008 WRP applications in LCCMR Corridors



1 inch equals 48 miles