

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

LCCMR ID: B14.19

Project Title: HCP - Acquisition for Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District (4h)

Total Project Budget: \$ \$200,000

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 200,000

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Region:

Southwest

County Name:

Blue Earth

City / Township:

Beauford or Lincoln

Summary: The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. will accelerate completion of the Lincoln or Perch Lake WPA by acquiring at least 40 acres of priority habitat.

Main Proposal: 0808-1-054-proposal-MN Valley Trust HCP Phase VI Proposal.doc

Project Budget: 0808-1-054-budget-MN Valley Trust Budget (HCP Phase VI - 4h).doc

Qualifications: 0808-1-054-qualifications-MN Valley Trust (HCP Phase VI - 4h) Organization and Project M

Letter of Resolution: 0808-1-054-resolution-Resolution 8-6-08 to Approve Submittal of Grant Proposals t

MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: Habitat Acquisition for Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District of USFWS – 4(h), Minnesota’s Habitat Conservation Partnership Phase VI

I. PROJECT STATEMENT:

The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. will accelerate the completion of the Lincoln Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) or Perch Lake WPA by acquiring at least 40 acres of priority habitat to expand one of those WPAs. The initial lands for these WPAs were acquired in part with ETF funds through prior HCP phases. Both WPAs are in focus area 10 (Southern MN Lakes) of the Habitat Corridors Partnership. The Trust will leverage the ETF funds by acquiring at least an additional 40 acres, using Trust and other non-state funds, in the same area. After restoration, lands will be donated and conveyed by the Trust to the USFWS, to be managed by the Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District of the US Fish & Wildlife Service as a Waterfowl Production Area.

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.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: Acquire 40 acres of priority wetland and grassland habitat **Budget:** \$ 200,000

The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. will acquire at least 40 acres of priority wetland and grassland habitat in HCP focus area 10 (Southern MN Lakes). The Trust will acquire at least an additional 40 acres, using Trust and other non-state funds, in the same area. Lands will be donated by the Trust, to be managed and owned by the US Fish & Wildlife Service as a Waterfowl Production Area.

The Trust is working with landowners in the following areas and anticipates completing one of these acquisitions with the Trust Fund grant:

- Acquisition of land to expand the Perch Lake Waterfowl Production Area in Beauford Township of Blue Earth County. Perch Lake is an important migratory waterfowl resting lake and a DNR designated shallow lake. This 480 acre lake hosts more than 10,000 migrating waterfowl each year and is designated as an important resting area for Lesser Scaup. The Trust earlier acquired other parcels to establish the Perch Lake WPA, in part with ETF funds through HCP Phases III and IV, and now wishes to accelerate the completion of the WPA.
- Acquisition of land to expand the Lincoln WPA in Lincoln Township of Blue Earth County. Historically, the area boasted tremendous waterfowl production due to a high density of wetlands and prairie habitat. The Trust earlier acquired parcels to begin this WPA, in part with ETF funds through HCP Phase III, and now is working to accelerate completion of the WPA.
- Acquisition of a parcel to expand the existing Evans Slough Complex in Ceresco Township of Blue Earth County. This will allow the Trust and USFWS to come one step closer to protecting

and restoring a 200 + acre wetland basin that was drained forty years ago for agricultural purposes. The basin is significant for migration and breeding for a host of waterfowl and other prairie pothole species. The addition of this tract will provide an opportunity to restore and conserve a significant core area ensuring excellent waterfowl and wildlife habitat benefits, while improving water quality in the Blue Earth River Watershed.

After acquisition and restoration of the habitat by the Minnesota Valley Trust, USFWS and other partners, the lands will be donated and conveyed to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for management as part of the Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District.

Deliverable

1. Acquire 40 acres

Completion Date

June 30, 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. MN Valley Trust works in close partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service in identifying properties for the MN Valley Wetland Management District, then planning and executing the restoration of the lands. Other partners include DNR, and many state conservation organizations and local conservation clubs.

B. Project Impact

This project will benefit a host of waterfowl species, including mallard, blue-winged teal, lesser scaup, northern pintail, redhead, wood duck, and canvasback. All species are Priority Species listed by the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture, NAWCA, MN DNR Long Range Duck Recovery Plan, and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. In addition, this area is host to more than 16 other species of waterfowl that will benefit from this project.

Acquisition and restoration of critical habitat are critical components and primary strategies of the Long Range Recovery Plan. This project will help to: 1) restore the breeding population objective of ducks; 2) restore the migration objectives for ducks in the Mississippi Flyway; and 3) fulfill the recreational objectives for waterfowl hunters and observers.

This project also will improve water quality in the Cobb and/or Watonwan River watersheds by retiring marginal cropland and restoring the wetlands and grasslands. After restoration and donation to the USFWS, the lands will be open to the public for wildlife-dependent recreational activities.

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

D. Long-Term Strategy

This particular project area is part of a larger strategy involving many other established projects and efforts -- NAWCA grants of more than \$25 million and more than 50 partners, USFWS Challenge Grants, EPA grants, CREP, numerous local grant programs and more than 20 local sportsman clubs active in the area. USFWS and partners have acquired more than 2,000 acres of habitat in the area to date and are restoring another 50 wetlands and 500 upland acres through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

This unique partnership exists as a result of the desire of LCCMR to encourage conservation partners to work together as a statewide collaboration to focus resources and bring additional funds to Minnesota's wildlife habitat resources. We are 18 formal partner agencies and organizations recognized for an ability to achieve the mission of restoring, enhancing and conserving habitat for the purpose of sustaining fish, wildlife and native plant communities for all generations.

Project Budget

IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>% FTE</u>
Acquisition (Including Easements): Fee title acquisition of 40 acres by nonprofit, for eventual donation to US Fish and Wildlife Service for Waterfowl Production Area managed by the MN Valley Wetland Management District	\$ 200,000	
	\$ -	
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$ 200,000	

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Remaining \$ From Previous Trust Fund Appropriation (if applicable): Phase V (2008) appropriation is not yet spent, but landowner negotiations are underway	\$ 50,000	<i>Negotiations underway with willing landowners</i>
Other Non-State \$ Being Leveraged During Project Period: Non-state funds will be spent by the MN Valley Trust on the project during the funding period to acquire an additional 40 acres. Funds are secured.	\$ 200,000	<i>Secured</i>
Other State \$ Being Spent During Project Period: None	\$ 0	
In-kind Services During Project Period: <i>What in-kind services will be provided during the funding period? List type of service(s) and estimated value. In-kind services listed should be specific to the project.</i>	\$ -	
Past Spending via Habitat Corridors Partnership: Phase II (2003) - \$98,000 ETF and \$741,700 other non-state funds Phase III (2005) - \$126,878 ETF and \$1,688,649 other non-state funds Phase IV (2007) - \$100,000 ETF and \$232,976 other non-state funds Phase V (2008) - \$50,000 ETF and at least \$50,000 other non-state funds to be spent. Negotiations are underway.	\$ 3,088,203	

Organization Description and Project Manager Qualifications

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.

The mission of the Minnesota Valley Trust is to:

- Expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge by 4,090 acres.
- Construct an environmental education and visitor center on the Minnesota Valley Refuge (completed in Fall 2007 on the Rapids Lake Unit near Carver and Jordan).
- Complete new visitor access, education and interpretive facilities on the Minnesota Valley Refuge, including trails and parking lots.

The Minnesota Valley Trust was established in 2001 to mitigate the impact of the thousands of flights sent over the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge from the new north-south runway at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

A 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization, the Minnesota Valley Trust works in cooperation with the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District.

Deborah Loon, Project Manager

Deborah Loon has served as the executive director of the Minnesota Valley Trust almost since its inception in 2001. In that role, she is the liaison with the USFWS and is the primary contact with all landowners and local communities. She also provides administrative support to the board of directors. Deb also serves as the executive director of Minnesota Valley Lands, Inc., overseeing all management and restoration of the lands acquired by the Trust.

Deb brings extensive experience in project management and organizational leadership for both nonprofit and for-profit organizations. She has a BA in political science from St. Olaf College.