

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

LCCMR ID: B15.09

Project Title: MeCC - Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements (3.2)

Total Project Budget: \$ \$1,140,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: July 2009 - June 2011 (2 yrs)

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 3,500,000

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Region:

Metro

County Name:

Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota,
Goodhue, Hennepin, Isanti, Le
Sueur, Nicollet, Ramsey, Rice,
Scott, Sherburne, Sibley,
Washington, Wright

City / Township:

Summary: To protect up to 600 acres of critical habitat and natural areas by securing permanent conservation easements and dedicating funds for the perpetual monitoring, management, and enforcement of those easements.

Main Proposal: 0808-1-038-proposal-proposal with project list.doc

Project Budget: 0808-1-038-budget-project budget.xls

Qualifications: 0808-1-038-qualifications-Organization description.doc

Map: 0808-1-038-maps-MeCC Mapped Corridors.jpg

Letter of Resolution: 0808-1-038-resolution-authorization letters.pdf

MAIN PROPOSAL

**PROJECT TITLE: Metro Conservation Corridors - Phase V
Minnesota Land Trust: Protect Significant Habitat**

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The pressure on the Twin Cities region's remaining natural lands is intensifying, with one million more people coming to the area by 2030. With such a short window of opportunity, the Metro Conservation Corridors project seeks to help protect a network of remaining critical habitat and natural areas to help maintain the quality of life in the region and to protect and improve the health of native vegetation, fish and wildlife species.

The Minnesota Land Trust has worked extensively in the greater Twin Cities area, particularly in Washington County, since 1992 to permanently protect natural and scenic land with an emphasis on using conservation easements. This strategy has been acknowledged by a variety of stakeholders, and the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, as one of the key tools necessary to achieve land conservation goals in a metropolitan area where escalating land values prohibit fee title acquisition of all priority lands.

The Land Trust will identify tracts of land within the mapped project areas critical to the protection of habitat and shoreland. We will carefully select, design and implement individual real estate projects to make sure that conservation goals and objectives can be met and that the conservation values are protected in perpetuity. Although we work with willing landowners, we prioritize projects and coordinate with other partners to the extent possible in order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

The Land Trust also proposes to enhance a long-standing partnership with Washington County by working with the County on 1-3 specific land and/or easement acquisition projects as part of the County's Land and Water Legacy Program. These projects all involve land with significant frontage on the St. Croix River and are high priority projects for Washington County.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: Protect Significant Habitat through Conservation Easements **Budget:** \$ 640,000

The Minnesota Land Trust will protect critical habitat in any of the mapped project areas by identifying and contacting interested landowners, negotiating and completing 5-7 permanent conservation easements on up to 300 acres of land, and dedicating funds for the perpetual monitoring, management and enforcement of the easements.

The Land Trust will work primarily with donated easements, purchasing easements when necessary and then at below market value whenever possible. We will work in any of the mapped project areas and currently has numerous projects pending. Current potential projects are identified on the attached list. While some of these projects may not be completed at all, new projects will be added as landowners are identified. We will continually evaluate these projects and pursue those that protect the highest quality habitat and maximize public benefit.

Deliverable

1. Protect up to 300 acres by identifying and contacting landowners, completing 5-7 conservation easements, and dedicating funds to ensure long-term easement sustainability.

Completion Date

6/30/2011

Result 2: Protect Significant Habitat along the St. Croix

through Land Acquisition in Fee
or through Conservation easements

Budget: \$500,000

The Minnesota Land Trust will work with Washington County to protect some of the few remaining large parcels of land along the St. Croix River. We will support the County on completion of 1-3 perpetual conservation easements or fee title acquisitions on up to 300 acres of land.

Washington County launched its Land and Water Legacy program in 2007 after voters approved a \$20 million referendum on November 7, 2006 for the preservation of water quality, woodlands and other natural areas. After soliticing land protection proposals, the County approved five "Tier One" priority projects.

The Land Trust will work with Washington County on 1-3 of its identified priority projects. All three parcels contain significant St. Croix River frontage and habitat values that support a variety of "Species in Greatest Conservation Need."

Deliverable

1. Protect up to 300 acres of land by working with Washington County to complete 1-3 conservation easements or fee title acquisitions

Completion Date

6/30/2011

III. PROJECT STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

A. Project Partners

The Land Trust coordinates its work with other Metro Conservation Corridors partners (please see overall proposal for list of project partners) as appropriate. Additionally, our partners include private landowners, as well as various units of state and local government that help in identifying potential projects.

B. Project Impact

The Minnesota Land Trust works in a variety of areas within the defined Metro Conservation Corridors, which span portions of 16 counties that make up the greater Twin Cities Metro Area. Our project protects important habitat by securing conservation easements on regionally significant ecological areas, key habitats for "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" as described in *Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare*, as well as key connections and buffers. The specific communities, landowners, habitats, and species benefited by the Land Trust's work will depend on the projects selected and completed under this phase of the grant.

Additionally, the Minnesota Land Trust holds more conservation easements than any other private conservation organization in the State, making it one of the most experienced organizations working with unique conservation tool. As we learn from our experiences in protecting land with conservation easements, we will continue to share our knowledge and techniques with others working in this area.

C. Time

2 years beginning on July1, 2009 and ending on June 30, 2011

D. Long-Term Strategy (if applicable)

This project is part of the Land Trust's long-term, strategic conservation agenda. The conservation agenda sets out the specific conservation focus of the Minnesota Land Trust. This focus includes natural habitats for wildlife, fish and plants, lakeshores, rivers and streams, and scenic landscapes accessible or visible to the public. The conservation agenda also identifies a suite of critical landscapes throughout the State that embody the natural and cultural features that make Minnesota unique. The Metropolitan Conservation Corridors is one of the Land Trust's identified critical landscapes – one that addresses the unique conservation challenges that exist in a largely developed area.

**Minnesota Land Trust
LCCMR Metro Conservation Corridors—Phase 5 Potential Project List
August 25, 2008**

The following is a list of projects the Minnesota Land Trust is currently considering.
Other projects may be added to the list as new landowners are contacted.
Many projects on the list will not be completed.
Others may be completed under prior phases of this program.

Northwest Area: Wright, Sherburne, Isanti and Anoka Counties

Site	Approximate Acres	Water Body (if applicable)	County
Deer Lake	34	Deer Lake	Anoka
Rum River	40	Rum River	Isanti
Rum River	65	Rum River	Isanti
Rum River	40	Rum River	Isanti
Rum River	36	Rum River	Isanti
Stanchfield Creek	100	Stanchfield Creek	Isanti
Elk River	128	Elk River	Sherburne
Twin Lakes	18	Twin Lakes	Isanti
Emmans Farm	80		Anoka
TOTAL	541		

Central Area: Hennepin and Ramsey Counties

Site	Approximate Acres	Water Body (if applicable)	County
Schendel Lake	40	Schendel Lake	Hennepin
Schendel Lake	TBD	Schendel Lake	Hennepin
Wood-Rill	20		Hennepin
Crow River	28	Crow River	Hennepin
TOTAL	88+		

East Area: Chisago and Washington Counties

Site	Approximate Acres	Water Body (if applicable)	County
Square Lake	34		Washington
Wild River State Park	10		Chisago

Valley Creek	110		Washington
Valley Creek	12	Valley Creek	Washington
Sunfish Lake Park	256	Sunfish Lake	Washington
St. Croix	100	St. Croix River	Washington
St. Croix	100	St. Croix River	Washington
St. Croix	100	St. Croix River	Washington
TOTAL	722		

Southwest Area: Carver, Scott, Sibley, LeSueur, Nicollet Counties

Site	Approximate Acres	Water Body (if applicable)	County
TOTAL			

Southeast Area: Dakota and Goodhue Counties

Site	Approximate Acres	Water Body (if applicable)	County
Akron Woods	160		Dakota
Bullard Creek	177	Bullard Creek	Goodhue
Bullard Creek	60	Bullard Creek	Goodhue
Hay Creek	140		Goodhue
Hok-si-la	10		Goodhue
Red Wing	500		Goodhue
Vermillion Bottoms	500		Goodhue
Richard Dorer Memorial Forest	111		Goodhue
Wacouta Beach	16		Goodhue
TOTAL	1,674		

Minnesota Land Trust Project Budget

IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT	% FTE
Personnel: Staff expenses including salaries, benefits (FICA,FUTA, SUI, worker's comp health insurance, 401 (k), etc.) and related costs for approximately 1.00 FTE for two years as follows: Conservation directors or other land protection staff (approximately .75 FTE) and Staff attorney and other support staff (approximately .25 FTE).	\$ 160,000	100% of 1 FTE
Travel: Mileage and related travel expenses in Minnesota.	\$ 5,000	
Conservation Easement/Land Acquisition Costs: Result 1: Includes purchase price of conservation easement(s); title work, insurance, etc.; maps, GIS (including project mapping by Community GIS); film; other (including appraisals, surveys, recording fees, etc.) to protect up to 300 acres of land.	\$ 370,000	
Result 2: Includes purchase price of conservation easement(s) or fee title acquisition.	\$ 500,000	
Conservation Easement Stewardship: Funds dedicated to perpetually monitoring, managing, and enforcing 5-7 easements	\$ 105,000	
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$ 1,140,000	

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Remaining \$ From Previous Trust Fund Appropriation (if applicable): Metro Corridors 2007: All funds are or will be obligated by September 2008. Metro Corridors 2008: \$250,000 – We have not yet begun spending the Phase IV allocation but all funds have been internally allocated to staff or specific projects.	\$225,000	We anticipate that all appropriations from Phases III (2007) & IV (2008) will be spent or legally committed prior to July 1, 2009
Other Non-State \$ Being Leveraged During Project Period: <i>Result 1:</i> 1,000,000 -These other funds represent an estimate of the potential value of easements donated to the Land Trust under this project. The value of donated easements is difficult to predict, but we believe we can achieve at least one million dollars in leverage. <i>Result 2:</i> \$2,500,000 - including Washington County, Met Council, landowner donations, and other private funds.	3,500,000	Pending, dependent upon actual projects completed.
Other State \$ Being Spent During Project Period: Unknown at this time.	Unknown	
In-kind Services During Project Period: While the Land Trust does not itemize the specific value of in-kind services, substantial amounts of unreimbursable staff time and overhead are required to complete land protection projects with Trust Funds.	Unknown	
Past Spending: Metro Corridors 2007: \$134,000; 2008: \$225,000. These values represent past Trust Fund appropriations to prior phases of this project. They do not include donated value of easements or funds from other sources spent on projects completed or expected to be completed under these grants.	\$ 359,000	

Minnesota Land Trust: Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description

Organization Description

The Minnesota Land Trust is a private, nonprofit organization that preserves the natural and scenic heritage of our State by permanently protecting lands and waters that define our communities and enrich our quality of life.

Since 1991, the Minnesota Land Trust has been helping landowners and local communities preserve our State's natural and scenic heritage in the face of increasing threats to our important landscapes. To meet our current challenges, the Land Trust has developed a *conservation agenda* to strategically guide our work and has adopted *integrated four-part program* to implement this agenda.

The *conservation agenda* sets out the specific *conservation focus* of the Minnesota Land Trust and identifies a suite of *critical landscapes* throughout the State that embody the natural and cultural features that make Minnesota unique.

The suite of strategies selected reflects our growing awareness that *permanently protecting* Minnesota's valuable lands and waters, particularly through the use of conservation easements, requires an expanded notion of land protection and includes:

- **Community Assistance.** We support and assist thoughtful community land use planning, programs and projects that use natural resource data to identify places to protect and places to build.
- **Direct Land Protection.** We identify and directly protect significant tracts of land throughout the State. We carefully select, design and implement individual real estate projects to make sure that conservation goals and objectives can be met and conservation values protected in perpetuity where appropriate. We continue to work extensively with conservation easements, using other real estate options when needed. The Land Trust is the only statewide organization that extensively uses conservation easements as a protection strategy. The Land Trust completed its first easement in 1993 encompassing 80 acres of land in Washington County. Since then, we have completed 369 projects protecting 33,138 acres throughout Minnesota.
- **Land Management.** We encourage and support the restoration and management of specific sites where appropriate to ensure their long-term ecological viability.
- **Research, Education and Advocacy.** We engage in research and provide information and materials to the public and policy makers on needs, issues and tools related to land conservation. We advocate at federal, state and local levels for policies, practices and programs that further our mission.

Project Manager Qualifications

Jane Prohaska, President and Executive Director

Jane Prohaska joined the Minnesota Land Trust staff in November 2000. Jane is responsible for providing programmatic leadership and operational oversight for all of the Land Trust's programs. Her duties include working with the Board of Trustees, creating and managing plans and budgets, and supervising staff. Jane is no stranger to conservation. She is a frequent lecturer on conservation issues nationally and recently authored a book for the Land Trust Alliance curriculum series, *Nonprofit Law and Recordkeeping for Land Trusts*. Prior to coming to the Minnesota Land Trust, Jane worked for The Nature Conservancy for 18 years, most recently as Vice President and Midwest Regional Director and prior to that as the Conservancy's Regional

Counsel, bringing a wealth of direct land preservation experience to the Land Trust. Jane also worked in the Office of the Minnesota Attorney General for several years where she practiced in the civil and criminal divisions. She has a law degree from the University of Minnesota and a bachelor's degree from Carleton College.

Other staff:

Sarah Strommen, Regional Conservation Director (Central Region)

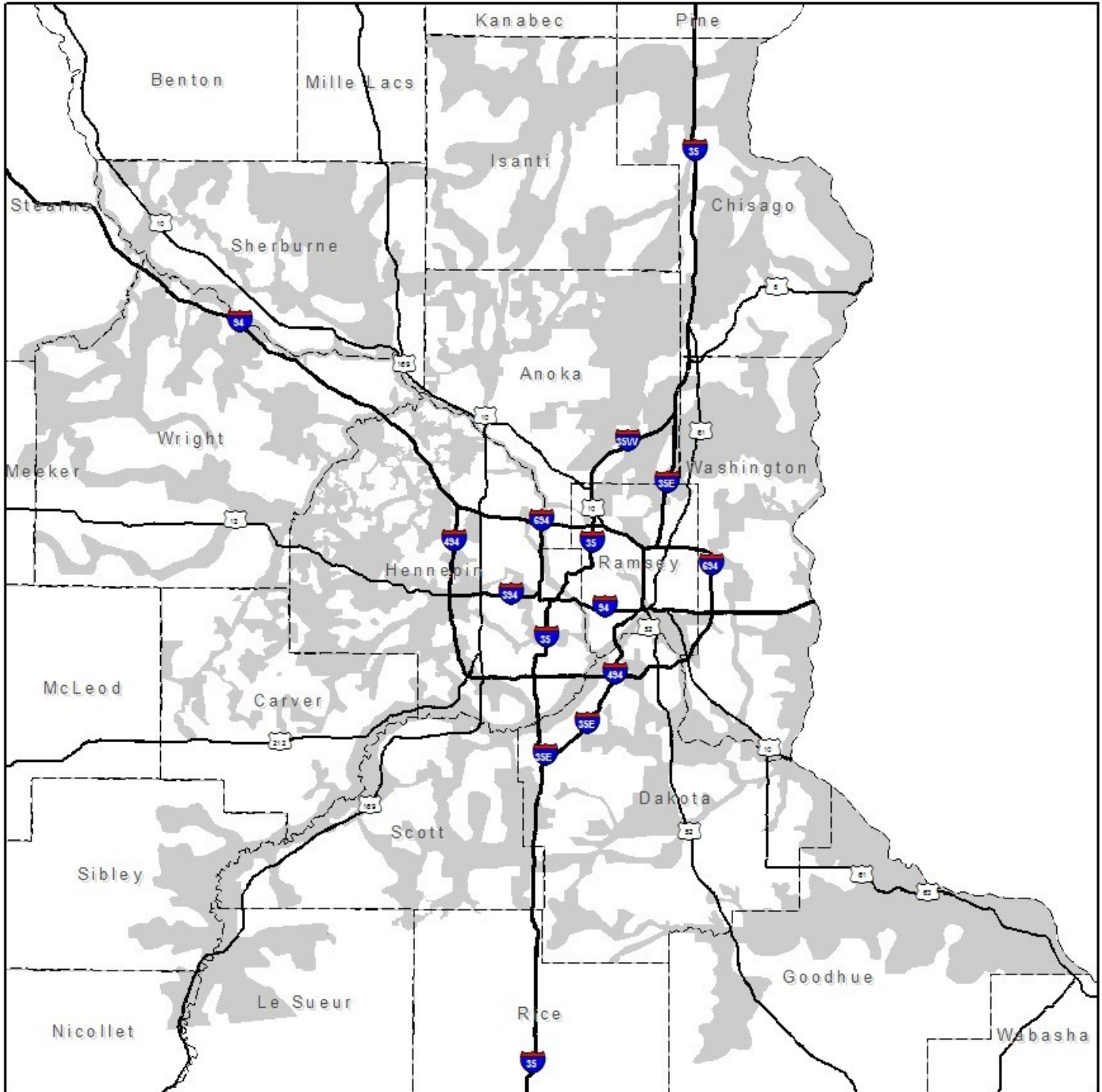
Sarah Strommen joined the Land Trust staff in October 2005 and serves as the Central Regional Conservation Director. Sarah is responsible for developing and implementing the Land Trust's program in the 26-county central region. This region includes the eleven-county greater metropolitan area and the counties to the west and north. Prior to joining the Land Trust, Sarah served as the Policy Director for the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness. She currently serves on the State's Clean Water Council and the City Council in the City of Ramsey, where her duties include being the liaison to the City's Environmental Policy Board. Sarah has a bachelor's degree in Biology from Grinnell College and a master's degree in Environmental Management from Duke University. She also was a Fulbright Scholar in Costa Rica, where she investigated sustainable development and bird conservation.

Regional Conservation Director (Southern Region)

Nancy Kafka joined the Minnesota Land Trust staff in May 2008. As the Conservation Director for the southern region, she is responsible for overseeing the Land Trust's conservation activities in the Mississippi Blufflands and surrounding areas in southeastern Minnesota as well as in other areas throughout southern Minnesota. Nancy returned to Minnesota after nearly 30 years living and working in New England, most recently as the senior program director in the Parks for People program at the Trust for Public Land's Boston office. Nancy graduated from the University of Minnesota with a bachelor's degree in Housing.

Support will be provided by the Land Trust's staff attorney and other administrative personnel.

Metro Conservation Corridors 2008 Focus Areas



- Interstate Highways
- Secondary Highways
- County Boundaries
- Metro Conservation Corridors