

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

LCCMR ID: B15.10

Project Title: MeCC - Fee Acquisition for Minnesota Valley NWR (3.3)

Total Project Budget: \$ \$900,000

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 900,000

First Name: Deborah

Last Name: Loon

Sponsoring Organization: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust

Address: 2312 Seabury Avenue

Minneapolis MN 55406

Telephone Number: 612-801-1935

Email: dloon@mnvalleytrust.org

Fax: 612-728-0700

Web Address: www.mnvalleytrust.org

Region:

Metro

County Name:

Sibley

City / Township:

Faxon and/or San Francisco

Summary: Fee title acquisition of 180 acres of significant habitat in the Minnesota River Valley within Carver, Scott or Sibley Counties for expansion of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Main Proposal: 0808-1-021-proposal-MN Valley Trust Proposal (MeCC Phase V - 3.3) 8.22.08.d

Project Budget: 0808-1-021-budget-MN Valley Trust Budget (MeCC Phase V - 3.3).doc

Qualifications: 0808-1-021-qualifications-MN Valley Trust (MeCC Phase V - 3.3) Organization

Map: 0808-1-021-maps-MeCC Mapped Corridors.jpg

Letter of Resolution: 0808-1-021-resolution-Resolution 8-6-08 to Approve Submittal of Grant Prop

Project Title: Metropolitan Conservation Corridors

Partner Project Title: Metro Conservation Corridors – Phase V – Minnesota Valley Trust, Inc. – 3.3, Expansion of Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Fee title acquisition of 180 acres of significant habitat in the Minnesota River Valley within Carver, Scott or Sibley Counties for expansion of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

These acquisitions will connect floodplain forest and prairie habitat in the Minnesota River bottoms, benefiting many species of wildlife including wood ducks, mallards, bald eagles, grassland nesting birds as well as numerous resident game species such as turkeys and deer.

In addition, this project will improve water quality by retiring cropland in the Minnesota River Valley and restoring lands to the natural habitats of floodplain forest, wetlands and prairie. When donated to the USFWS, the public will be given access to the lands for wildlife-dependent recreational activities, such as birding, photography, hiking, interpretation, hunting and fishing.

All work will occur within the mapped corridor of the Metropolitan Conservation Corridors, a partnership of state agencies and nonprofit conservation organizations that work together to accelerate the conservation and protection of high quality lands and waters in the expanding metropolitan region.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: Fee Title Acquisition

Budget: \$ 900,000

Fee title acquisition of 180 acres of significant habitat in the Minnesota River Valley within Carver, Scott and/or Sibley Counties. The Minnesota Valley Trust will leverage these grant funds and acquire an additional 180 acres or more with other, non-state funds.

The Trust is working with multiple landowners within the following expansion units of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, as prioritized and delineated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in its Comprehensive Conservation Plan. We anticipate completing at least one acquisition with the Trust Funds in the following target areas, expanding the Refuge:

- San Francisco Unit - San Francisco Township, Carver County
- Jessenland Unit - Faxon and Jessenland Townships, Sibley County
- Ahlswede Unit - Scott County and
- St. Lawrence Unit - St. Lawrence Township, Scott County.

The lands to be acquired have been identified by the US Fish and Wildlife Service as offering significant habitat for wildlife and opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation. The lands run along the Minnesota River and include river frontage, floodplain, cropland and bluffs. Some of the targeted lands are adjacent to lands already in public ownership (FWS, DNR) or previously acquired by the MN Valley Trust to be donated to the FWS for the Refuge expansion. All of the properties are within the mapped corridor of the Metropolitan Conservation Corridors partnership.

These acquisitions will connect the river, floodplain forest and prairie habitat in the Minnesota River bottoms, benefiting many species of wildlife including wood ducks, mallards, bald eagles, grassland nesting birds as well as numerous resident game species such as turkeys and deer.

This project will improve water quality by retiring cropland in the Minnesota River Valley and restoring lands to the natural habitats of floodplain forest, wetlands and prairie. When donated to the USFWS, the public will be given access to the lands for wildlife-dependent recreational activities, such as birding, photography, hiking, interpretation, hunting and fishing.

After acquisition and restoration of the habitat by the Minnesota Valley Trust 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 National Wildlife Refuge.

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. Acquire 180 acres in fee title with ETF funds and 180 acres in fee title with other non-state funds	June 30, 2011

III. PROJECT STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

A. Project Partners

US Fish & Wildlife Service, Friends of the Minnesota Valley, local units of government and others.

B. Project Impact

Connect the river, floodplain forest and prairie habitat in the Minnesota River bottoms, benefiting many species of wildlife including wood ducks, mallards, bald eagles, grassland nesting birds as well as numerous resident game species such as turkeys and deer.

Improve water quality of the Minnesota River by retiring cropland and restoring lands to the natural habitats of floodplain forest, wetlands and prairie.

Establish new lands for the public's enjoyment through the wildlife-dependent recreational activities of birding, photography, hiking, interpretation, hunting and fishing.

C. Time

2 years – July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2011

D. Long-Term Strategy

This project is part of a long-term, larger strategy to expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge by up to 10,000 acres. The expansion strategy was developed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in its Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Refuge, completed September 2004 after a thorough public input process.

The expansion units that were identified in the CCP are all in the Minnesota River Valley and include the Rapids Lake Unit (Carver County), San Francisco Unit (Carver County), St. Lawrence Unit (Scott County), Ahlswede Unit (Scott County) and Jessenland Unit (Sibley County).

Project Budget

IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET

BUDGET ITEM <i>(See list of Eligible & Non-Eligible Costs, p. 17)</i>	AMOUNT	% FTE
Acquisition (Including Easements): Fee title acquisition of 180 acres by nonprofit, for eventual donation to US Fish and Wildlife Service for MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	\$ 900,000	
	\$ -	
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$ 900,000	

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Remaining \$ From Previous Trust Fund Appropriation (if applicable):	\$ 0	
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 180 acres. Funds are secured.	\$ 900,000	<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: Phase I (2003) - \$290,000 ETF and \$1,137,030 other non-state funds Phase II (2005) - \$230,000 ETF and \$428,000 other non-state funds Phase III (2007) - \$210,000 ETF and \$376,473 other non-state funds Phase IV (2008) - \$225,000 ETF and at least \$225,000 other non-state funds (non-state leveraged funds not fully spent as of 8/22/08 submission, but ETF funds spent; report will be submitted after non-state funds completed)	\$ 3,121,503	

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.

