

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund 2009 Phase 2 Request for Proposals (RFP)

LCCMR ID: 025-A2

Project Title: Rim Match – Partnership To Protect Critical Grasslands

Total Project Budget: \$ \$3,000,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: July 2009 to July 2011

Other Non-State Funds: \$ \$3,000,000.00

Priority: A2. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Lands

First Name: Kim

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Sponsoring Organization: DNR

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Region:

County Name:

City / Township:

NW, Central, Metro,
SW, SE

Anoka, Becker, Benton, Big Stone,
Blue Earth, Brow

Summary: Private donations will be matched through the RIM Matching Program to purchase critical grasslands in CRP adjacent to existing WMAs or designated wildlife lakes in southern and western Minnesota.

Main Proposal: 0908-2-003-proposal-2009 RIM Match_main_proposal.doc

Project Budget: 0908-2-003-budget-2009 LCCMR RIM Match Project Budget.xls

Qualifications: 0908-2-003-qualifications-RESUMEKH2.DOC

Map:

Letter of Resolution:

MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: RIM MATCH – PARTNERSHIP TO PROTECT CRITICAL GRASSLANDS

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Private donations will be matched through the RIM Matching Program to purchase and permanently protect and retain critical grasslands currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) adjacent to existing state wildlife management areas (WMAs) or designated wildlife lakes in southern and western Minnesota. Continued high commodity prices and competing economic opportunities threaten the important wildlife habitat base currently enrolled in farm programs. A major source of partnership matching to this effort will be private funds contributed to the Forest Legacy Program. This dual partnership of conservation easements on forestlands in northern Minnesota and the purchase of crucial grasslands in southern and western Minnesota will provide long-term protection while providing additional opportunities for hunting and wildlife watching across Minnesota.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: WMA Land Acquisition Budget: \$ 3,000,000.00

There are currently numerous willing sellers of priority wildlife lands currently enrolled in CRP within or adjacent to existing WMA projects or designated wildlife lakes. The state may not have an opportunity to purchase them for many years and the threat exists that the soil, water, and wildlife conservation values will be lost as they are converted to commodity crops as the CRP contracts expire. Completing acquisition of these CRP parcels within existing WMA project areas will build on the habitat values already invested on these state lands by increasing management efficiency, reducing development costs, complimenting previous land and development efforts, and enhancing public use. Lands adjacent to designated wildlife lakes will protect shoreline, provide nesting cover, and improve water quality.

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. 1,000 acres of WMA lands	June 30, 2011

III. PROJECT STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

A. Project Partners

The major donor is anticipated to be The Nature Conservancy through their donations to the Forest Legacy Program. There is currently a backlog of completed or pledged donations to the RIM Match Program that exceed available state matching dollars by over \$3 million.

B. Project Impact

Undisturbed grassland cover is a key component for a variety of grassland-dependent wildlife species such as pheasants. CRP and other farm programs have provided hundreds of thousands of acres of undisturbed grassland and population numbers of pheasants and other grassland species have responded. Waterfowl and other grassland nesting birds also benefited from the increase in grasslands in association with wetlands.

However, with greater economic incentives for commodity crops, reduced interest in renewing CRP contracts, and the future threat to farmland retirement programs, many of these undisturbed grasslands will be put under cultivation again. Acquisition of CRP lands adjacent to existing state wildlife lands and designated wildlife lakes will insure that the CRP lands with the highest potential for wildlife production will be permanently protected.

C. Time

Acquisition efforts under this proposal will be completed within two years.

D. Long-Term Strategy (if applicable)

This proposal is part of a long-term investment in Minnesota habitat, wildlife, and recreational opportunities in collaboration with a variety of other groups and programs, such as the Habitat Corridor Project, WMA Land Acquisition Program, Working Lands Initiative, North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA), and RIM Match Program. These efforts help fulfill a citizen's advisory committee recommendation of an accelerated goal of acquiring 210,500 acres of new WMA lands within the next 10 years, based on an analysis of current and future needs for wildlife habitat, wildlife population management, and hunter access ("Report on the Wildlife Management Area Land Acquisition Program, December 2002"). This larger effort is supported by private donations, the surcharge on the small game license, federal grant dollars, critical habitat license plate funds, and other state appropriations.

Project Budget

RIM MATCH - PARTNERSHIP TO PROTECT CRITICAL GRASSLANDS

IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>% FTE</u>
Personnel:	\$ -	%
Contracts:	\$ -	
Equipment/Tools:	\$ -	
Acquisition (Including Easements): 1,000 acres as state WMA lands	\$ 2,950,000	
Restoration:	\$ -	
Other: Professional services	\$ 50,000	
	\$ -	
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$ 3,000,000	

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Remaining \$ From Previous Trust Fund Appropriation (if applicable):	\$ -	
Other Non-State \$ Being Leveraged During Project Period: <i>Private cash or land donations from individuals, corporations, or nonprofit organizations. The Nature Conservancy is anticipated to contribute over \$3 million to the Forest Legacy Program alone.</i>	\$ 3,000,000	<i>Pledged</i>
Other State \$ Being Spent During Project Period:	\$ -	
Surcharge on small game license	\$ 1,800,000	<i>Secured</i>
Pheasant and Turkey Stamp	\$ 340,000	<i>Secured</i>
RIM Match	\$ 3,000,000	<i>Secured</i>
Habitat Corridor Project-Environment Trust Fund	\$ 1,000,000	<i>Pending</i>
In-kind Services During Project Period:	\$ -	
Past Spending:	\$ -	

Project Manager: Kim Hennings

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Appointments and Past Positions

1978-present Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
1981-present Wildlife Land Acquisition Coordinator
1986-present RIM Match Coordinator
1978-1980 Wildlife Planner

Education

1975 Bachelor of Science, Wildlife Management, University of Wisconsin - Madison
1977 Master of Science, Wildlife Management, University of Minnesota - St. Paul

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