

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2010 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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**LCCMR ID: 094-C**

**Project Title:**

MFF-Protecting and Conserving Forest Blocks for Multiple benefits

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**LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:**

C. Habitat Restoration, Enhancement, and Acquisition

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**Total Project Budget: \$** \$2,775,000

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 2 years, 2010 - 2012

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

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**Summary:**

Project will result in the conservation of large forest blocks through identification of priority forests, forest protection using conservation easements and other tools, easement monitoring, and program evaluation and improvement.

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**Location:**

**Region:** NW, NE, Central, SE

**County Name:** Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Rice, St. Louis, Wabasha

**City / Township:**

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_____ Knowledge Base	_____ Broad App.	_____ Innovation
_____ Leverage	_____ Outcomes	
_____ Partnerships	_____ Urgency	_____ TOTAL

# MAIN PROPOSAL

## PROJECT TITLE: Forests for the Future – Protecting and Conserving Large Forest Blocks for Multiple Benefits

### I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The state faces a major challenge today and in the future due to the thousands of acres of privately owned forest being sold across Minnesota. These working forestland sales can impact the state's ability to sustain its forests for multiple public benefits. This proposal fills a critical need to identify priority forest parcels for future protection by funds from the constitutional amendment and other sources. It also builds a responsive program management system and funds a conservation easement management account to ensure that public conservation investments continue to provide substantial public benefits. This proposal contributes to the implementation of the Forests for the Future Program that was established by the Minnesota Legislature during 2008 (Minnesota Statutes, Section 84.66). The Minnesota Forests for the Future Program:

- Conserves private forestlands throughout the state that, in combination with public forestlands, provides: 1) public recreational access; 2) timber production and other economic opportunities; and 3) ecological values including habitat protection.
- Defines a comprehensive set of goals, strategies, and targets that respond to land development and fragmentation, climate change, recreational access, and changes in the forest economy.
- Builds on past efforts that used federal, state (including ETF), and private funds to acquire easements on over 65,000 acres of private forestland in the past 9 years.

This project advances the implementation of several of the Statewide Preservation and Conservation Plan's recommendations (Land Use 8 & 10 and Habitat 1 & 3).

This proposal has results in the following areas:

- Identification of priority forests;
- Acquisition of priority forests using permanent conservation easements and other tools;
- Funding an easement stewardship account
- Responsive program management system for Forests for the Future Program.

### II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

#### Result 1: Identification of priority forests

**Budget: \$30,000**

This project will use a GIS-based decision support tool to identify and prioritize parcels critical for protecting large blocks of forestland from parcelization, conversion, and fragmentation. This result will build on the township scale analysis that was completed for the Statewide Preservation and Conservation Plan using methodology developed by the Nature Conservancy (FLEET model) and the Natural Resources Research Institute. This system integrates recreation, economic and environmental values and provides statewide indices of important forestlands at the township level and below. The identification and prioritization of forest parcels is critical to ensure that limited acquisition dollars from all sources are wisely invested over the next 25 years. This will implement recommendation #8 from the program's stakeholder Advisory Team report.

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Completion of a map of priority forestlands (based on recreation, economics, and ecology) for application of easements, fee-title acquisition or other conservation tools	<b>6/30/2011</b>
2. Refined acreage targets and priority lands for the Forests for the Future Program	<b>9/30/2011</b>

**Result 2: Acquisition funding of priority forests** **Budget: \$ 2,000,000**

This will fund the acquisition of priority easement and/or fee title projects throughout the forested portions of Minnesota.. The proposed acquisition funding will be used to fund the highest priority projects.

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Acquire conservation easements on up to 13,000 acres (see map)	<b>6/30/2012</b>

**Result 3: Funding an Easement Stewardship Account** **Budget: \$515,000**

This result will fund a conservation easement management account that will provide future funding for easement monitoring and enforcement on the 25 completed forest easement projects and any additional projects funded through this proposal in order to ensure that public benefits from the acquired lands will continue.

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Develop easement management plans for the acquired easements	<b>6/30/2012</b>
2. Implement the easement monitoring plans	<b>6/30/2012</b>

**Result 4: Responsive program management system for Forests for the Future** **Budget: \$230,000**

This project will develop and implement a system that integrates economic, recreational, and ecological measures for evaluating program results and ensuring continuous improvement of the Minnesota Forests for the Future Program. It will be developed in the context of easement monitoring plans (Result 3) and will implement recommendation #14 from the program's stakeholder Advisory Team report.

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Develop an integrated landscape-scale evaluation protocol	<b>6/30/2011</b>
2. Apply and test the evaluation protocol on up to 25 easements (65,000+ acres) in conjunction with easement monitoring (Result 3) and report results	<b>6/30/2012</b>

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

Richard Peterson, DNR Forestry, (Results 2&3); Andy Holdsworth & Keith Wendt DNR OMBS (Results 1, 3 &4); US Forest Service (Result 2).

**B. Timeline Requirements**

Project is anticipated to be completed by 6/30/2012. Easement monitoring will commence within 1 year after easement projects close.

**C. Long-Term Strategy**

This project is part of the ongoing Minnesota Forests for the Future Program which has targeted up to 530,000 acres of forest for protection over the next 25 years. Easements acquired under this program will require ongoing stewardship funds to manage the easements including the costs of monitoring and enforcement of easements. A credible system for continuous program improvement will ensure that the investment of public funds returns the conservation results intended.

## Project Budget

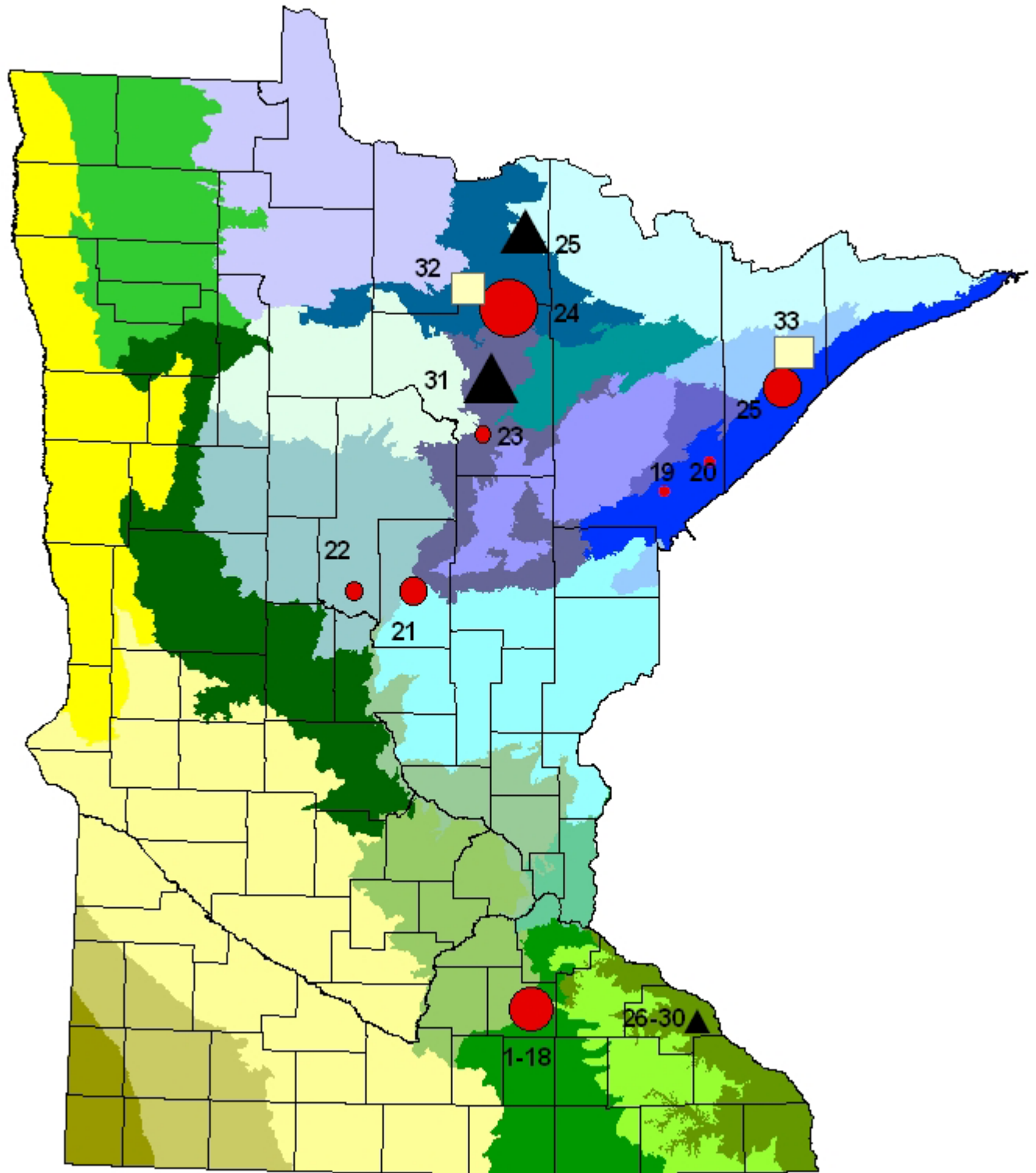
### IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET (2 years)

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
<b>Personnel:</b> Coordinator to oversee prioritization, acquisition, and evaluation results associated with this proposal. (new 1/2 FTE for 3 years)	\$ 114,000
GIS analyst for project prioritization (Result 1) may be contract with NRRI or internal.	\$ 28,000
	\$ -
<b>Contracts:</b> Remote sensing for program management system (Result 4). A university remote sensing lab will be likely contractor.	\$ 28,000
Field testing of program management system (Result 3). Seasonal field technicians will be contracted.	\$ 50,000
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> Map and report printing, field supplies	\$ 5,000
<b>Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):</b> DNR held easements-up to 13,000 acres-includes up to 5% for professional services including appraisals, etc.	\$ 2,000,000
<b>Travel:</b> All results: Vehicle Fleet costs associated with project development, easement acquisition, field testing of program management system.	\$ 20,000
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b> Result 3: Easement stewardship account. \$525,000. (includes funding for 20 projects @\$10,000 + 3@ \$15,000 + 1@ \$20,000 + 1 @ \$250,000)	\$ 515,000
Satellite imagery for program management system (Result 4)	\$ 15,000
<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR</b>	<b>\$ 2,775,000</b>

### V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
<b>Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b> Federal funds for FFY2010 of \$3 million have been requested from the Forest Legacy Program.	\$3,000,000	Pending USFS FY2010 request
<b>Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>	\$ -	
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period:</b>		
<b>Remaining \$ from Current Trust Fund Appropriation (if applicable):</b> \$ 2 million 2007 Environmental Trust fund appropriation has been received and is being directed to several pending projects in Wabasha County. Project closings anticipated late summer/early fall 2009 pending approval for extension or earlier if project can be completed at an earlier date.	\$2,000,000	Unspent 4/1/09
<b>Funding History:</b> \$2 million 2007 ETF appropriation has been appropriated for several pending projects in SE (Wabasha Blufflands).	\$2,000,000	

# Minnesota Forests for the Future Program (Forest Legacy)



□ Proposed New Projects

● Completed Projects

▲ Projects Pending

## **LCCMR Proposal 2010**

### **Title: Forest Legacy**

#### **Project Manager Qualifications**

**Project Manager:** Richard Peterson is the Forest Legacy Coordinator for the DNR Division of Forestry. His program responsibilities are the Forest Legacy Program, the newly established Forests for the Future Program and the Upper Mississippi Forest Partnership. He has a BS in Botany from the College of Biological Sciences at the University of Minnesota, and a MS in Forest Management from the University of Minnesota. He worked in several field locations in northern Minnesota for 6 years. For 16 years, beginning in 1989, he managed forestry programs in south-central Minnesota as Area Forester in Faribault. Since 1999, he has managed the Forest Legacy Program for the Department of Natural Resources. During that time he has been project manager for all 25 Forest Legacy Projects completed in Minnesota totaling nearly 66,000 acres and valued at nearly \$24 million.

**Team Member:** Andy Holdsworth, PhD, is Science Policy Coordinator in DNR's Office of Management and Budget Services. Andrew Holdsworth works to advance conservation planning, performance measurement, and integrated resource management. He received a PhD in Conservation Biology from the University of Minnesota. His research expertise is in forest ecology, invasive species, fire ecology, and sustainable forest management. In addition to agency and academic work, he has worked in the non-profit sector as a science coordinator for landscape-scale conservation planning efforts in the southwestern U.S. and as a visiting researcher for an Amazon research institute.

**Team Member:** Keith Wendt has been with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources since 1981. He now manages the Policy, Research, and Planning Section within DNR's Office of Management and Budget. Wendt's team of resource scientists and policy planners work to advance integrated resource management, conservation performance measurement, research, and strategic planning. He has been building integrated policy frameworks to address complex forest issues for over a decade. Wendt previously served as DNR Plant Ecologist and Research Supervisor for the Natural Heritage Program. Prior to DNR, Wendt was an academic staff member at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum, where he co-founded the journal "Restoration and Management Notes" – a journal of the Society for Ecological Restoration. He did MS degree work in Vegetation Ecology and Environmental Planning at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

#### **Organization Description**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources works with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life. This mission requires sharing stewardship with citizens and partners, working together to address often-competing interests.