

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

LCCMR ID: 099-C

Project Title:

Itasca Private Forest Land Practices Implementation Pilot Project

LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:

C. Habitat Restoration, Enhancement, and Acquisition

Total Project Budget: \$ \$298,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 years, 2010 - 2013

Other Non-State Funds: \$ \$330,000

Summary:

The Itasca SWCD will assist existing Forest Stewardship Plan holders in Itasca County implement forest management practices through USDA Federal Cost Share Programs, leveraging \$660,000 and benefiting 55,000 NIPF acres.

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Location:

Region: NE

County Name: Itasca

City / Township: Countywide

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

Project Title: Itasca Private Forest Land Practices Implementation Pilot Project

I. Project Statement:

The goals of this project are to significantly increase the implementation of forest management practices, restore and enhance wildlife habitat, protect water resources, increase the sequestration of carbon, and reduce the threat of invasive species on non-industrial private forests (NIPF) throughout Itasca County. This project will help the Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District(SWCD) achieve these goals by facilitating the implementation of action items outlined in Forest Stewardship plans on NIPF lands. Many of the 600 landowners within Itasca County with existing Stewardship plans will implement action items defined in the plans, applying sound sustaining forest management practices, if they are provided additional educational, planning, and financial assistance. Successes demonstrated through this pilot project can be evaluated and implemented throughout the forested regions of the state.

This grant from the Environmental Natural Resources Trust Fund to the Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District(SWCD) will be used to contract with foresters, who will complete field and follow-up visits to as many as 600 stewardship plan holders, providing the information and planning assistance they need. Landowners motivated by forester contacts, and eligible for the programs, will be encouraged to apply for USDA cost share programs, such as the Environmental Quality Improvement Program(EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program(WHIP), and Conservation Reserve Programs(CRP), to implement planned forest management practices. This state funded technical assistance makes it possible to help generate USDA contracts and long term landowner commitments with a projected value of up to \$660,000 and providing a positive benefit on up to 55,000 acres of NIPF.

II. Description of Project Results:

Result 1: Implementation of Individual Private Landowner Forest Stewardship Plan Activities Budget: \$223,000

Each existing forest stewardship plan includes an inventory of forest resources, and an outline of management practices the landowner should consider to achieve their management goals. Technical assistance (TA) to help Landowners implement Forest Stewardship Plans and encourage the utilizing of USDA or other agency cost share funding on up to 55,000 acres of non-industrial private forest lands. TA activities will include landowner contacts, practice plans, and referrals to NRCS or other agencies for application assistance. Follow up visits through this project will result in the application of practices estimated to be:

Deliverable:

Completion Date: June 2013

1. Planting up to 600 acres of native conifer and hardwood trees.
2. Thinning or release of up to 1,100 acres of forest to improve tree growth, vigor, species composition, and economic value.
3. 275 acres of site preparation activities such as scarification, to promote increased natural seeding.
4. Protect 200 acres of tree plantings from animal damage.
5. Control invasive species on 20 acres of forestland.
6. Create 55 acres of forest openings and shrub plantings for wildlife habitat.

Result 2: Improved Active Long Term Land Management On Private Lands

Budget: \$75,000

As many as 55,000 acres of non-industrial private forest land will benefit by landowners making informed decisions on sustainable long term forest management including:

Deliverable:

Completion Date: June 2013

1. Scheduling or timing harvests for maximum benefits to timber and site quality, stand regeneration, desired species composition, and wildlife habitat.
2. Preserving existing forest stands that protect water resources.
3. Furthering the goals of the Minnesota Forest Resources Council desired future conditions for the North Central Landscape Region by working with landowners to increase conifers, mimic historical natural patterns and functions, help protect forest land from forest fragmentation and protect natural shorelines.
4. Increased landowner participation in the Sustainable Forestry Incentives Act
5. Evaluation of pilot project results will help show project effectiveness and will identify what barriers and challenges the land managers still need to address.

III. Project Strategy

A. Project Team/Partners:

Itasca County SWCD - Grant Manager, Fiscal Agent, Program Coordinator.

Laurentian Resource Conservation and Development - Project planning and grant writing assistance.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service –Cost share program provider, University of Minnesota Extension-Itasca County: Educational and evaluation assistance.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources- Stewardship Plan oversight

UPM-Blandin Paper Company-Technical input to project.

B. Timeline Requirements:

We propose a thirty six month grant beginning July 1, 2010 and ending on June 30, 2013.

C. Long-Term Strategy:

The Itasca Private Forest Land Practices Implementation Pilot Project will improve forest health and implement sustainable forestry practices and activities. These forest management activities reflect the intent of the 1995 Sustainable Forest Resources Act, endorsed by the Minnesota State Legislature, and further the efforts of the Minnesota Forest Resource Council and the North Central Landscape Planning Committee.

NRCS staff will conduct annual status reviews on cost share contracts resulting from this grant. The contracts will range from three to ten years in length. Landowners will be obligating themselves to maintain tree planting practices for a minimum of twenty years. Forestry practices will be routinely monitored by the NRCS to ensure project goals are achieved.

Project Budget

IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET ([Insert # of years for project] years)

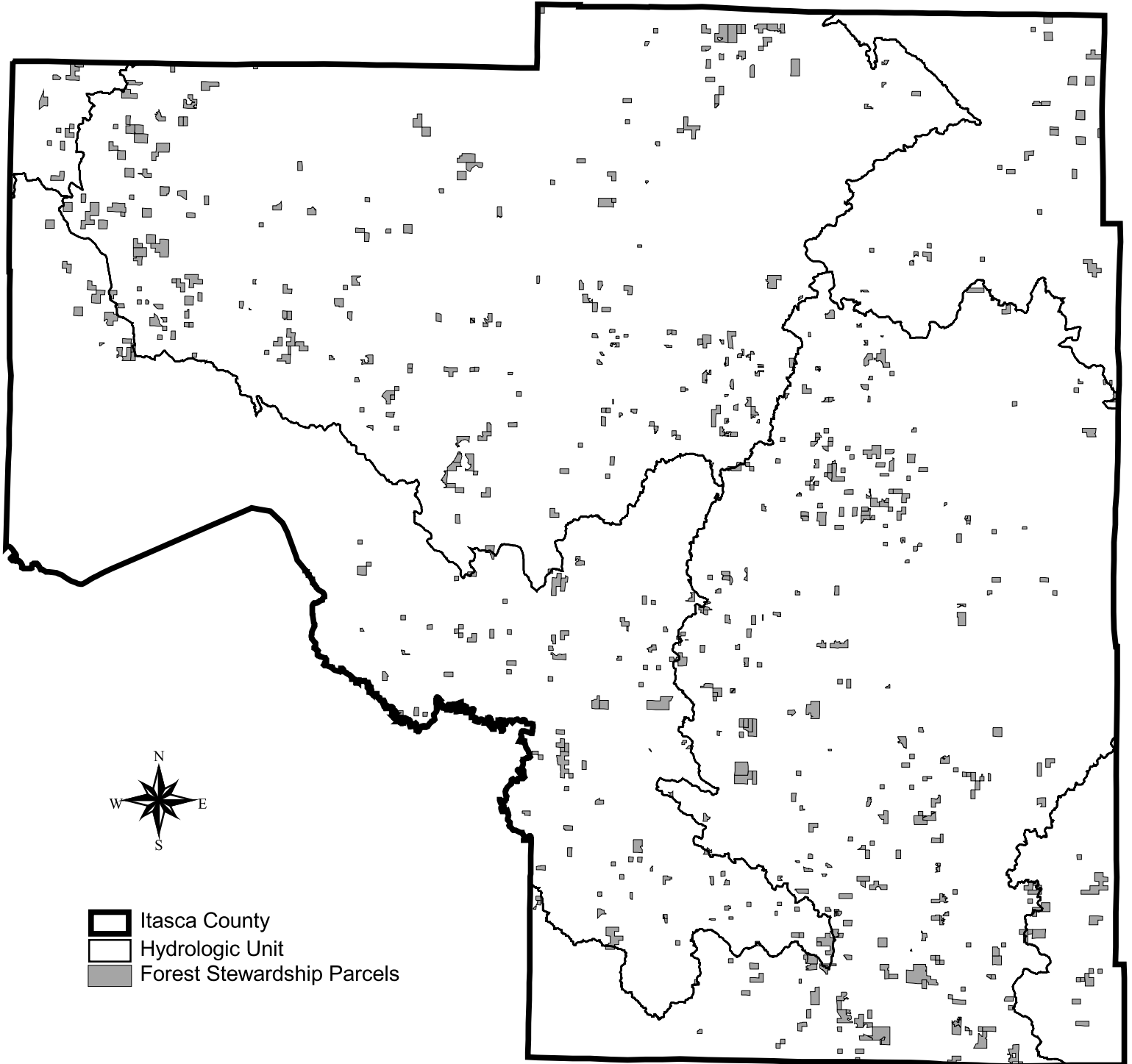
BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Personnel: Itasca SWCD Project/Grant manager 5% FTE for 3 yrs	\$20,000
Itasca SWCD Forester Technical Support/ Project oversight 10% FTE 3 yrs	\$ 28,000
	\$ -
Contracts:	\$ -
Forest Stewardship Implementation Forester(s), Review existing stewardship plans, provide implementation planning, USDA or other Program plan development 100%	\$ 250,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Provided by contractor	\$ -
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): Information provided to landowner	\$ -
Travel: Cover by contractor	\$ -
Additional Budget Items:	\$ -
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$ 298,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: <i>USDA and other program cost share assistance based on predetermined practice rates</i>	\$ 330,000	<i>Pending</i>
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Additional implementation funding will be sought as it becomes available through other grants or agencies	\$ -	<i>Pending</i>
In-kind Services During Project Period: USDA program participation requires landowner to provide remaining practice implementation support (estimated at 50 % of total practice cost)	\$ 330,000	<i>Pending</i>
Remaining \$ from Current Trust Fund Appropriation (if applicable):	NA	
Funding History: Forest Stewardship plans already written 600 plans X an estimated \$750.00 per plan	\$ 450,000	

FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLANS

ITASCA COUNTY MINNESOTA



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Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District

Grant Manager Qualifications:

The Itasca SWCD has a very successful history of putting together natural resource management project proposals, obtaining funding, and implementing those projects. In the past 5 years we have implemented or completed projects including: Lake Sensitivity Study, Long Term Lake Monitoring, Firewise, Shoreland Revegetation Grant, Surface Waters Assessments Grants, Native Shoreland Buffer Incentives, Natural Environment Lakes study, Shoreland Stabilization Sand Lake Grant, and the Bowstring Watershed Shoreland Stabilization Grant and others. We have partnered with many agencies and institutions to accomplish these projects including : The Minn. DNR, The Minn. BWSR, U of M Extension Service, Itasca County, The U.S. Forest Service, the NRRI, ICOLA, ICC, IWLP and others. We have collected baseline data, developed and implemented action plans, have influenced County Zoning policy, have implemented countless on the ground projects, have facilitated USDA & MN cost share funding.