

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

LCCMR ID: 108-C

Project Title:

Fish Creek Greenway Corridor Land Acquisition

LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:

C. Habitat Restoration, Enhancement, and Acquisition

Total Project Budget: \$ \$1,500,000

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ \$100,000

Summary:

The City of Maplewood seeks to acquire and permanently protect land parcels of highest ecological value along the Fish Creek Greenway Corridor that are currently at risk from development.

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Sponsoring Organization: City of Maplewood

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Location:

Region: Metro

County Name: Ramsey

City / Township: Maplewood

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

MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: Fish Creek Greenway Corridor Land Acquisition

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Fish Creek is located in southern Maplewood (see map attached). This beautiful stream drains out of Carver Lake in Woodbury, runs through oak forest, maple basswood forest, and emergent and open water marshes before cutting through a scenic ravine and tumbling over a series of waterfalls on its way to join the Mississippi River. Some of the creek lies within the Mississippi River National River and Recreation Area. The creek and adjoining woods and grasslands provide critical habitat for numerous wildlife species and migratory birds traveling the Mississippi River Flyway. It is one of the last largely undeveloped stream corridors in Ramsey County.

This unique resource has such high wildlife, aesthetic, recreation, and water quality value, that it has been identified by multiple local, regional, state, and federal agencies as warranting protection. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) identifies it as both an area of Regional Ecological Significance and a Site of Biological Significance in the Minnesota County Biological Survey, and includes both Carver Lake and Fish Creek in their water quality monitoring program.

In 2008, the City of Maplewood conducted Minnesota Land Cover Classification (MLCCS) inventory of this area, mapped the Fish Creek Natural Area Greenway, discussed protection priorities with county staff, and hosted a Nature-in-the-Neighborhood workshop for residents in the Fish Creek area. The city's recently revised comprehensive plan identifies protection of the undeveloped lands in and adjacent to the Fish Creek Corridor as a top conservation priority. The city's goals are: limit habitat fragmentation, protect water quality in the creek, preserve wildlife, aesthetic, and recreational values of the area, and provide a continuous wildlife migration corridor.

Much of the creek and shoreline, as well as some adjoining upland areas, are owned by Ramsey County and managed as part of their open space system. But Fish Creek remains at risk from encroaching development. Approximately 60 acres of adjoining uplands slated for development, have or will shortly become available for purchase. The city is actively pursuing opportunities for purchasing available land and, where that is not possible, encouraging private landowners to establish conservation easements.

The next two years are a critical time for land acquisition in the Fish Creek corridor. Such opportunities may never come again. Securing the requested funding for this proposal would provide the city with the opportunity to protect 10 acres of the most environmentally important parcels which are deemed critical to the preservation of this greenway corridor.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: Land Acquisition **Budget:** \$1,500,000

Deliverable

1. Purchase 10 acres of priority lands in Fish Creek corridor

Completion Date

December 2011

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

The City of Maplewood has been partnering with Friends of Maplewood Nature, a non-profit organization working to protect and restore natural areas in Maplewood, and the North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Applied Ecological Services (AES) will be asked to join the team as consulting ecologists. AES conducted the MLCCS inventory of this area and assisted the city in presenting a Nature-in-the-Neighborhood workshop for landowners in the Fish Creek Corridor in 2008.

B. Timeline Requirements

The landowner is currently in foreclosure and the land in receivership. It will likely become available summer 2009. Should this project receive funding, the city would seek to complete land acquisition activities as quickly as possible.

C. Long-Term Strategy

The City of Maplewood's long-term strategy for the Fish Creek Corridor is to achieve protection of the corridor through land acquisition, conservation easements by private landowners, and conservation design for lands that are developed.

Our acquisition strategy is to purchase the highest priority parcels along the corridor and adjoining uplands as they become available. To do so, the city will continue to seek grant funds from a variety of sources, including but not limited to the Legacy Fund and DNR Metro Greenways grant program. Legislation was introduced this session (HF 2055/SF 1821) to seek Legacy Funds for land acquisition, but the viability of those bills is uncertain.

Our strategy on conservation easements and conservation design development is to host a workshop to educate and encourage landowners in this area to establish conservation easements on their properties and/or to engage in conservation design strategies. The city will work with Minnesota Land Trust and one-on-one with interested residents.

Project Budget

IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET (1 year)

BUDGET ITEM <i>(See list of Eligible & Non-Eligible Costs, p. 13)</i>	AMOUNT
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): Purchase of 10 acres of highest ecological value lands adjoining the Fish Creek Corridor.	\$1,500,000
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$ 1,500,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

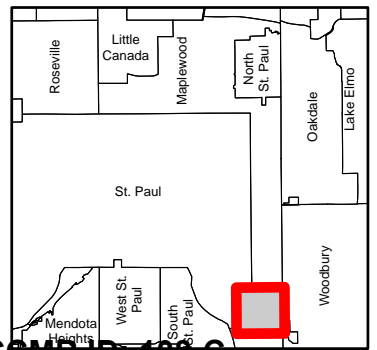
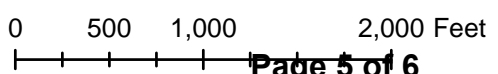
SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: City of Maplewood has \$100,000 of open space acquisition funding that could be used for this project.	\$100,000	<i>Indicate: Pending</i>
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: The City of Maplewood is working with our state representatives and senator to pursue Legacy Fund financing (HF 2055; \$2.4 million appropriation requested) and will submit a grant proposal to the DNR Metro Greenway grant program.	2,400,000+	<i>Indicate: Pending</i>

Fish Creek Greenway Corridor



 Ramsey County Park

Possible Land Acquisitions
 Property A - 6.037 acres 300' buffer from Fish Creek
 Property B - 3.222 acres Steep slope area
 Property C - 0.787 acres Steep slope area
Total Acres - 10.04



Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description:

Project Manager Qualifications:

DuWayne Konewko is the Director of the Community Development and Parks Department for Maplewood. He is responsible for reviewing all development that occurs within the city as well as managing the city's many parks and open spaces.

Mr. Konewko graduated from the University of Minnesota with a B.S. in Biology and has worked in both the private and public sector during his over 20 year career in the natural resources field. He spent seven years as the director of Environmental Services and Planning for Aitkin County, Minnesota and later served as a Project Manager for a consulting firm in Duluth, Minnesota. Mr. Konewko began his work at the city of Maplewood in 2003 as the Environmental Manager/Health Official and in 2007 was appointed as the fulltime Environmental Manager with the Parks and Open Space under his supervision. He was appointed as the Deputy Public Works Director in early 2008 and was appointed as the Community Development and Parks Director in October of 2008.

Organization Description:

The City of Maplewood has a proud history of conservation and environmental leadership. In 1993, Maplewood was one of the first cities to pass an open space bonding referendum for the acquisition of land for conservation purposes. These funds totaling \$5 million dollars were used to acquire parcels from willing sellers to build the city's network of Neighborhood Preserves. The citizens who led the original Open Space drive ranked the Fish Creek area as one of the most important for acquisition activities, but unfortunately the city was unable to find a willing seller at the time.

Maplewood's 2030 Comprehensive Plan (draft) leads again by including a Natural Resources Plan chapter and designating Natural Area Greenways. It articulates a vision for stewardship of our natural resources and goals that include protecting and buffering ecosystems, and connecting and enlarging natural areas and wildlife habitat across public and private lands.

Maplewood's rain garden program is another example where the city practices conservation, environmental leadership, and responsible stewardship. Since 1997 over 500 residential rain gardens and over 40 larger city rain gardens have been installed. Maplewood's rain garden program has and continues to serve as a model not only for other cities within the metro area, but for cities across the country.