

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

LCCMR ID: 125-E1

Project Title:

Community Conservation Assistance: Strengthening Local Governments Conservation Capacity

LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:

E. Natural Resource Conservation Planning and Implementation

Total Project Budget: \$ \$827,000

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ \$325,000

Summary:

Community Conservation Assistance is a multidisciplinary, interagency effort to expand and accelerate local efforts to incorporate natural resources information/analysis into land use plans and actions to protect land and water.

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Sponsoring Organization: DNR

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Web Address: _____

Location:

Region: Central, Metro, SW, SE

County Name: Anoka, Benton, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Fillmore, Goodhue, Hennepin, Houston, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Olmsted, Ramsey, Scott, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd, Wabasha, Washington, Winona, Wright

City / Township: all eligible in 23 counties

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

MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: Community Conservation Assistance: Strengthening Local Governments' Conservation Capacity

I. PROJECT STATEMENT:

This project proposes a variety of approaches to inform local government staff, their officials, professional associations, and consultants on the fundamental importance of using natural resources information and analysis in local land use planning and implementation to conserve vital natural resources. Working with local audiences is especially important since the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, Stormwater Steering Committee report, and Clean Water Council 2008 Work Plan all single out local land use as a key driver of water and land degradation and fragmentation in the State.

The goal of this proposal is to expand and accelerate DNR Central Region's successful three-year track record of developing and offering natural resource-based land use workshops and tools targeted to local government staff and elected/appointed officials in its 23 county region. Between 2006 and 2009, with foundation support, Central Region's Community Assistance unit (~2.5 FTE equivalents) and its project partners created and offered 30 workshops to over 1100 participants from Little Falls to Lewiston. Workshops (sponsored by several professional local government associations and Government Training Services (GTS)) focused on natural resources based land use planning and implementation, conservation development, redefining the development process to maximize both public and private benefits of development, and options to diversify agricultural landscapes and rural economies through the inclusion of natural cover types. For its efforts, the DNR and its partners were named the 2008 Partnership of the Year by Minnesota Environmental Initiative.

This goal supports DNR's overall conservation direction that: 1) acknowledges landscape changes brought about by local decisions and 2) identifies community assistance to local governments as a new strategy in the agency's *Conservation Agenda* to improve land and water conditions.

Concrete outputs of this effort will include: 1) development of needed, new workshops for local governments (e.g., conservation subdivisions/shoreland rules, TDML's); 2) accelerated delivery of already developed workshops to local government officials through GTS; 3) development and delivery of a new training course on natural resource based land use planning for the land use consulting community; and 4) direct assistance to local governments in 1-2 selected portions of the region that agree to work across boundaries to achieve improved land and water conditions.

As designed, this project focuses on 3 of the 4 ways to bring about landscape change: 1) face-to-face education and outreach; 2) regulation; and 3) incentives. The fourth tool - acquisition and restoration - is not included in the budget because DNR's Metro Greenways' acquisition and restoration funding might be able to complement some components of this effort in 12 of the region's 23 counties.

Result 1: Natural Resource Based Land Use Outreach to Local Governments Budget: \$315,500

This result assists local governments with conservation decisions by 1) using natural resources information, local knowledge, and professional expertise to design new and continue to offer existing workshops; 2) developing and offering training for consultants to local governments on natural resources based land use planning; and 3) providing direct face-to-face assistance to communities facing significant development-conservation tradeoffs.

Deliverable

1. 18 total natural resource-based land use workshops for local governments offered through Government Training Services to educate local decision-makers
2. Development and offering of 2 new workshops – e.g., shore land, TMDL's,

Completion Date

6/2012

6/2012

- agricultural landscapes (6 offerings/2yrs) to address critical land use issues
- | | |
|---|--------|
| 3. Development and 4 training sessions on <u>natural resource based</u> planning for consulting firms that advise local governments | 6/2012 |
| 4. Provide multidisciplinary assistance (information, GIS analysis) to multiple local governments working across boundaries to conserve natural resources | 6/2012 |

Result 2: Community Incentives to Local Governments

Budget: \$ 325,000

This result provides financial incentives to assist local governments in DNR’s 23-county Central Region with the integration of natural resources information, data, and analysis into local development and conservation plans, policies, and practices (excluding land restoration and acquisition).

Deliverable

Completion Date

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Grants to 20-25 local governments to strengthen conservation outcomes – match amount to be determined; 50% match maximum | 6/2012 |
|---|--------|

Result 3: Unique and Sensitive Southeast Minnesota: An Interjurisdictional, Interagency, Interdisciplinary Approach to Achieve Improved Watershed Health

Budget: \$ 186,500

This result develops an interjurisdictional and interagency watershed approach to achieve improved land and water conditions in the Root, Whitewater, or Zumbro River Watersheds.

Deliverable

Completion Date

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Selection of (sub) watershed and local communities based on suite of criteria | 6/2011 |
| 2. Identification of local and state partners; review of local water plans; organize and help coordinate a process to develop shared watershed goals and strategies | 6/2012 |
| 3. Document process in final report and recommend next steps for implementation | 6/2012 |

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Leadership and Coordination: Central Region Community Assistance Manager and staff; Regional Director; other DNR divisional staff and leadership

Product Development and Delivery

Government Training Services – partner in Natural Resources Land Use Series for local governments
Land Use consulting firms

All professional local government associations – Metro Cities; League of Mn Cities, Association of Mn Counties; Mn Association of Townships; Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

State Agencies - Department of Agriculture; Pollution Control Agency; Board of Water and Soil Resources
Key conservation nonprofits and watershed partnerships

B. Timeline Requirements

Program development requires a minimum of two years funding because outcomes depend both on good information and good working relationships with local partners. Comparable local government assistance efforts suggest that a minimum of 2-3 years is needed to change local thinking, and, more typically, 5 years.

C. Long-Term Strategy

The DNR’s *Conservation Agenda* identifies community assistance as a key strategy to address impacts to land and water resources. This two-year funding request is seen as a “bridge” to continue work with local governments begun in 2006 as the DNR transitions internally to combine Waters and Ecological Resources and adopt a watershed focus.

Project Budget

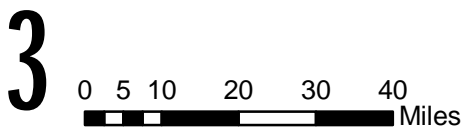
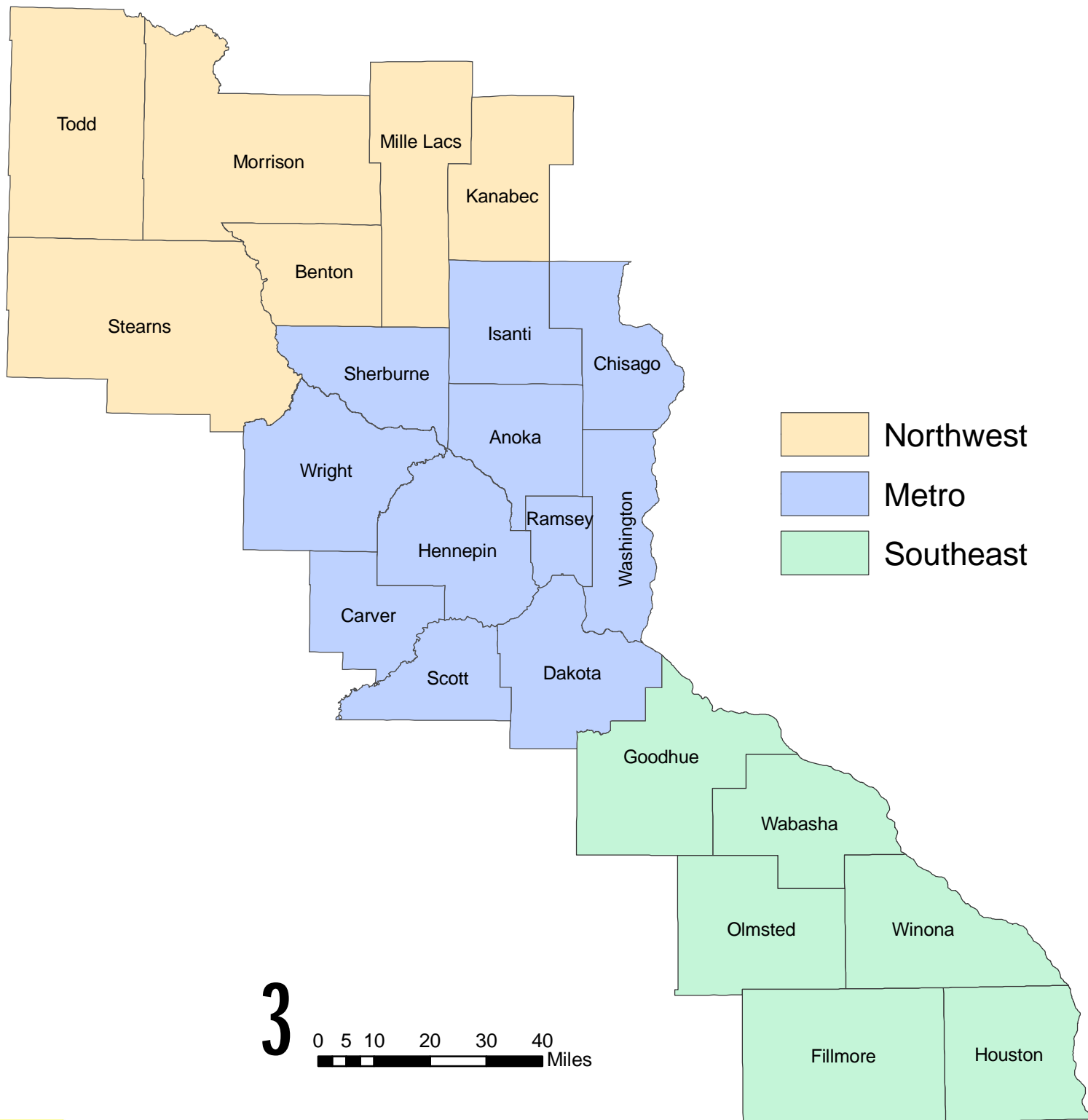
IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET (2 years)

| <u>BUDGET ITEM</u> | <u>AMOUNT</u> |
|---|------------------|
| Personnel: | \$ - |
| 1.0 FTE new, unclassified Community Assistance Specialist and watershed liaison for FY 2011-12; 6 SE Minnesota counties; 70% salary; 30% benefits | \$185,000 |
| 1.0 FTE new, unclassified Community Assistance/GIS Specialist and watershed liaison for FY 2011-12 for the Greater Metro (12-county) region; 70% salary; 30% benefits | \$185,000 |
| Contracts: | \$ - |
| Contracts with Subject Matter Experts to work with DNR staff to develop and deliver new workshops (6); new training course for land use consultants (4) | \$75,000 |
| Contracts with Government Training Services handles logistics for 18 workshops over 2 years; subsidy for local governments to attend due to budget limitations | \$50,000 |
| Equipment/Tools/Supplies | \$0 |
| Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): | \$0 |
| Travel: Instate travel by community assistance 2 specialists to meet with local governments; 18 local government workshops in region (Little Falls, St. Paul, and Rochester) | \$3,000 |
| Additional Budget Items: Grant funds that support a range of conservation options by local governments in 23-county region | \$325,000 |
| Space rental/refreshments for special meetings (4-6) with local governments | \$4,000 |
| | \$827,000 |

V. OTHER FUNDS

| <u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u> | <u>AMOUNT</u> | <u>Status</u> |
|---|---|-----------------|
| Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Local government match to community conservation grants; local government in-kind; pro bono by consulting firms in workshops | \$325,000 | Pending |
| Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: ETF funded Metro Greenways Program, FY2011 - Community Assistance Specialist existing, unclassified position; \$125,000 for grants in FY2011 to only 12 counties | \$162,500 | Pending |
| In-kind Services During Project Period: Participation by DNR divisions, Regional Operations, and PCA/BWSR staff in workshop and training development; local government outreach; and cross disciplinary and agency coordination | \$100,000 | Secured |
| Remaining \$ from Current Trust Fund Appropriation (if applicable): | \$19,000 | Secured |
| Funding History: Since 2004, \$590,000 in external funding (Bush and McKnight Foundations) has supported a concentrated effort to deliver community assistance to local governments. In 2007 and 2008, \$181,000 in Community Conservation Assistance grants have been awarded to local governments through ETF- funded Metro Greenways. In 2007 and 2008, \$1,655,635 was awarded to local governments and their representatives to protect high quality natural habitat. | \$2,416,635 (\$1,855,635 ETF Funds) | Past support |

DNR Central Region Community Assistance Sections



8/29/06

Central Regional Operations is a lean unit comprised of the Regional Director for DNR's 23 county Central Region, a regional planner, a regional information officer, and 4 community assistance staff dedicated to working with local governments and others on interdisciplinary efforts. Regional Operations was the birthplace of DNR's Metro Greenways Program and the Trout Stream Watershed Initiative and has also produced Green Infrastructure mapping for the region.

As Community Assistance Manager within Regional Operations, Sharon Pfeifer supervises three Regional Operations staff that dedicates a total of one FTE equivalent to community assistance in the 23 county region. Sharon has participated in DNR's leadership and supervisory training programs as well as in the Department of Administration's Core Manager Training Program. She holds a doctorate in ecology and a masters degree in environmental policy and is a two-time recipient of the AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science) Diplomacy Fellowship. In 2005, she completed a Bush Foundation Leadership Fellowship on Green Infrastructure. If funded, Sharon will be directly involved in the scoping and development of Result 1 and will oversee and guide staff and partners responsible for deliverables under Results 1-3. Sharon has effectively partnered with others in the private and public sectors to produce important and useful outcomes in the last decade, including 1) a regional scale assessment of growth pressures on natural resources; 2) an identification of regionally significant ecological areas in the 7-county metro; and 3) the initiation of DNR's Metro Greenways Planning Grant Program. In May 2008, Sharon and private and public sector partners received the 2008 Partnership Award from the Mn Environmental Initiative (MEI) for the development of several natural resource based land use planning workshops and roundtables for local governments.