

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

LCCMR ID: 137-E1

Project Title:

Lower Mississippi River Habitat Restoration Program

LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:

E. Natural Resource Conservation Planning and Implementation

Total Project Budget: \$ \$740,000

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ \$0

Summary:

Habitat and hydraulic reconnection of the Zumbro and Root River floodplain corridors to the Mississippi River through private lands outreach and partner coordination.

Name: Jennifer Ronnenberg

Sponsoring Organization: Zumbro Watershed Partnership, Inc.

Address: 1485 Industrial Dr NW, Room 102

Rochester MN 55901

Telephone Number: (507) 202-2092

Email: admin@zumbrowatershed.org

Fax: (507) 280-2858

Web Address: www.zumbrowatershed.org

Location:

Region: SE

County Name: Goodhue, Houston, Wabasha

City / Township:

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

MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: Lower Mississippi River Habitat Restoration Program

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

This program is needed to improve fish and wildlife habitat and water quality along the Lower Mississippi River from the Twin Cities to the Iowa border. It will reconnect tributaries that have been sequestered from their floodplains; restore floodplain forest, wetland, and prairie while protecting and enhancing existing large forested tracts. These efforts will result in cleaner water, less sediment and nutrients, more aquatic vegetation, improved fishing, more waterfowl, songbirds, and other wildlife, more mussels, healthier forests, and increased overall biodiversity along the Lower Mississippi River and its tributaries. Restoring these habitats will increase hunting, fishing, bird watching, canoeing and general recreational use of this area.

The project will increase the level of technical assistance provided to floodplain landowners and communities along portions of the Zumbro and Root Rivers. A coordinator will be hired to provide technical assistance while organizing the activities of partners in the area. The coordinator will also develop a long-term protection and restoration plan for each project site. This will include a hydraulic analysis that will evaluate opportunities for reconnecting the Zumbro and Root rivers to their floodplains. The preferred floodplain management scenario from the analysis along with restoration and protection plans with interested landowners will be used to inform future LOHC and other funding requests.

The Lower Mississippi River Habitat Restoration Program has 2 primary focus areas: 1) Lower Root River and 2) Lower Zumbro River. In concert, projects within these focus areas will increase overall habitat connectivity, improve forest, prairie, and marsh habitats, and improve water quality within the Lower Mississippi River corridor. Migrating waterfowl, songbirds, and other fish and wildlife that require or benefit from large, contiguous tracts of natural habitats spread throughout the Mississippi River floodplain and tributaries will especially benefit from this program.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: Landowner Outreach and Technical Assistance **Budget:** \$ 480,000

Comprehensive habitat plans will be developed for floodplain lands. Plans will address sustainable forestry, water quality, habitat management and protection options within the context of the larger project area plan. The project coordinator will assist landowners with procuring funding from a variety of sources including state and federal programs.

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. Contact most Landowners in 100 year Floodplain	12/31/10
2. Comprehensive habitat plans for 25% of landowners	06/31/11
3. 10% Enrollment in a habitat improvement/protection program	06/31/12

Result 2: Community and Local Government Outreach & Planning **Budget:** \$ 260,000

The project coordinator will work closely with local governments and communities to develop land use options for communities with floodplains. A floodplain hydraulic model and scenarios

will be developed to identify different forms of floodplain management that prevent property damage while enhancing a community amenity and improving water quality and habitat.

Deliverable

Completion Date

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1. Floodplain and flood damage prevention model and scenario development – Hydraulic Study | 02/31/11 |
| 2. Community and stakeholder outreach | 06/31/11 |
| 3. Land use and Comprehensive Plan Amendments | 06/31/12 |

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

The project will build upon a strong partnership already in place. Each partner plays a unique role in accomplishing specific tasks as follows:

- Audubon – monitoring, education/outreach, project implementation
- Conservation Fund – land acquisition, interim financing
- US Fish and Wildlife Service – land acquisition, technical assistance, monitoring, private lands assistance, funding restoration and management projects, education/outreach
- Minnesota Land Trust – conservation easements, stewarding and monitoring easements, private lands education
- The Nature Conservancy – funding restoration and management projects, community relations, land acquisition, technical assistance, education/outreach, marketing, planning and coordination
- Minnesota Forest Resource Council – Southeast Landscape Team – funding restoration and management projects, education/outreach, resource coordination
- Ducks Unlimited – planning and coordination
- Mn Department of Natural Resources – land acquisition and management, technical assistance, private lands assistance, monitoring, mapping, funding and implementing restoration and management projects, education/outreach, planning and coordination

B. Timeline Requirements

The first year will focus on procuring adequate individual landowner and community support for a larger floodplain protection and restoration strategy. Development of site based management plans in year one will identify existing protection and restoration opportunities that can be implemented with other funding in year 2 and beyond. Education and garnering community support in year one will be critical to implementing long-term floodplain management via land use and comprehensive plans.

C. Long-Term Strategy

Project partners have been conducting floodplain protection and restoration on private lands for many years. Work is often done opportunistically and in response to property damaging flood incidents in absence of a coordinated effort, sustainable funding or long-term plan. This has hindered efforts to secure significant state and federal floodplain protection and restoration funding, including USDA NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection, BWSR RIM easements and adoption of land use plan provisions. Partners see this project as a prerequisite to securing long-term funding from the sources listed above and the newly approved dedicated funds along with giving the project a competitive advantage for future Army Corps of Engineers funding. The intensified landowner outreach component to this project is intended to develop a list of landowners within the project area that are interested in protecting and restoring floodplain habitats. The list of participating landowners will be used in future LOHC funding requests.

Project Budget

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

BUDGET ITEM (See list of Eligible & Non-Eligible Costs, p. 13)	AMOUNT
Personnel:	\$ -
Contracts:	\$ -
Private Lands Assistance - 1.0 FTE 70% Salary 30% Benefits for 2 years	\$ 120,000
Project Coordination and Community Outreach - .5 FTE 70% Salary 30% Benefits for 2 years	\$ 60,000
Development of a hydraulic model and scenario development.	\$ 190,000
Easement and Acquisition Appraisals	\$ 50,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	\$ -
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): In this column, indicate the proposed # of acres and who will hold title (e.g. DNR, Non-profit).	\$ 300,000
Travel:	\$ 20,000
Additional Budget Items:	\$ -
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$ 740,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: NA	\$ -
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Non committed at this time	
In-kind Services During Project Period: Project partners will provide project oversight and assistance.	\$ 50,000
Remaining \$ from Current Trust Fund Appropriation (if applicable): NA	
Funding History:	\$ -
USFWS - Floodplain Protection 2009	\$ 600,000
USFWS - hydraulic modeling on Refuge portion of Root River	\$ 30,000
The Nature Conservancy - Floodplain Protection in 2004 & 2007	\$ 364,000

Lower Mississippi River Habitat Restoration Project Locations

Zumbro River Project Site

Root River Project Site

Winona

Rochester

Root River

Scale: 0 3.75 7.5 15 Miles

Legend:

- Cities
- Wildlife Management Areas
- Upper Miss Refuge USFWS
- DNR Scientific & Natural Area
- DNR Forestry Lands
- Major Roads
- Root State Parks
- County Boundaries

LCCMR ID: 137-E1

LCCMR 2010 Proposal: Project Manager Qualifications & Organization Description

Qualifications of Project Manager

The project manager for the Lower Mississippi River Habitat Restoration Program proposal will be Jennifer Ronnenberg, Watershed Coordinator of the Zumbro Watershed Partnership, Inc. Jennifer has worked for the Partnership since 2005, and administered the NRCS Conservation Partnership Initiative (CPI) grant from 2005-2007, and the McKnight Foundation grant from 2007-2009. As the grant administrator, she compiled all reports, facilitated numerous partner and community meetings, tracked all budget invoices and expenditures, as well as contractor and in-kind partner hours and projects. Jennifer has both an outreach and a technical natural resource background, having previously worked for the Freeborn Soil and Water Conservation District and as an Interpretive Naturalist at Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park.

Responsibilities of Project Manager

1. Serve as the primary administrator and point of contact for grant activities.
2. Compile all necessary reports and budgets for the grant period.
3. Monitor and track progress of the Private Lands Technician for the development of comprehensive habitat and conservation plans.
4. Assist with procuring funds for landowners from a variety of sources and programs.
5. Work with local governments and communities to develop land use options for communities with floodplains.

Description of Organization

Zumbro Watershed Partnership, Inc is a 501 (c)(3) organization created to serve as a catalyst for interaction between watershed citizens and natural resource professionals. The ZWP is a member driven organization, working with citizens and professional partners to achieve mutual goals of protecting and restoring the natural resources and social benefits of a healthy watershed. The mission of the ZWP is "To Promote the Protection and Improvement of the Zumbro River Watershed".

The ZWP has administered two previous grant awards, and cooperated/hosted numerous public outreach events. We have also been the funding source for 5 public demonstration sites throughout the watershed. Previous grants include: the Natural Resource Conservation Service Conservation Partnership Initiative grant for \$400,000 and the McKnight Foundation operation and outreach grant for \$50,000. Current grant awards include a second McKnight Foundation grant for \$40,000, and the MPCA Surface Water Assessment Grant for \$25,000.