

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2011-2012 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

LCCMR ID: 008-A1

Project Title: Final Phase of the Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas

Category: A1. Natural Resource Data and Information: Collection

Total Project Budget: \$ \$664,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 yrs, July 2011 - June 2014

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 0

Summary:

This will complete the Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas, a statewide, comprehensive bird survey, with a final year of data collection and two years to analyze and present the information.

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Location

Region: Statewide

Ecological Section: Statewide

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

<input type="checkbox"/> Funding Priorities	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> Outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge Base
<input type="checkbox"/> Extent of Impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific/Tech Basis	<input type="checkbox"/> Urgency
<input type="checkbox"/> Capacity Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/> Leverage	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment	<input type="checkbox"/> TOTAL <input type="checkbox"/> %

PROJECT TITLE: Final Phase of the Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

We are requesting 3 years of funding to complete The Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA). This phase will include the last year of data collection and 2 years to complete data analysis and production of the final products. The BBA is a comprehensive, statewide survey of the breeding distribution of all bird species in Minnesota. It began in July 2008 and has received 4 years of funding from LCCMR. This funding request is for years 5-7 of the project (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2015) and will bring the project to a close. The challenges for this phase include; completing surveys in those parts of the state that were not covered in Years 1-4, primarily townships distant from population centers; conducting quality control on the database; and producing the maps and summary text that will make up the final products. Final products will include; detailed distribution maps, a compilation of the data, and a synopsis of the states of each breeding bird species in Minnesota. This information will be available through a website, and we anticipate publishing a book pending other funding. The database with the raw information will be provided to the primary partners including the Department of Natural Resources.

The BBA is consistent with many aspects of the LCCMR State Conservation and Preservation Plan, and fits LCCMR Funding Priority Category “Natural Resource Data and Information.” The BBA’s greatest value will be its contribution to wildlife conservation by identifying areas of high bird diversity, density, and concentration for particular species of concern. It can thus guide habitat protection, restoration, and management efforts by providing essential distribution information for many species and areas for which we have little data.

The BBA is housed at, and day-to-day operations overseen by, Audubon Minnesota, with strategic and technical guidance from numerous project partners. The NRRI at U of MN-Duluth is overseeing statewide point count and habitat data collection. Utilizing an anticipated 1,500 volunteers to collect data on the distribution and abundance of birds, the BBA will directly engage Minnesota’s citizens with bird conservation and our natural resources. As sentinels for Minnesota’s environmental quality, the state’s breeding birds are a window into our goal to provide sustainable resources for future generations. The atlas will be an invaluable tool in helping us monitor our ability to achieve that goal.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Data Collection Budget: \$ 224,133

A) Continue ongoing, recruitment and training of project staff and surveyors for final field season. We will continue to employ a full-time coordinator reporting to a multi-partner Steering Committee. The 2013 breeding season will be the fifth and final year of data gathering from all townships in Minnesota. Most data will be collected by volunteers overseen by 31 volunteer regional coordinators who are recruited statewide, and provided with ongoing training and support.

B) Complete survey and point count data in each township. One 3X3 mi. survey block in each Township will be surveyed for species and breeding evidence. To obtain density and habitat data 10 paid and specially trained seasonal staff will conduct point counts in every Township. These data will provide the systematic information on the distribution and abundance of bird species across the state.

C) Complete counts in inaccessible and incomplete areas. An estimated 43 townships in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and 78 townships in the remote peatlands are considered too remote or physically inaccessible to be surveyed by volunteers. Additionally, there are townships that for a variety of reasons will not be on schedule for completion at the end of year 4. For these Townships we will utilize the seasonal point count staff and reimburse volunteers for their expenses.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Continue ongoing recruitment and training of as many as 1,500 volunteer field surveyors and 31 regional coordinators.	May 2013
2. Complete survey and point count data collection in 1,830 accessible Minnesota Townships.	August 2013
3. Complete data collection in an expected minimum of 121 inaccessible and 400 incompletely surveyed Townships	August 2013

Activity 2: Data Management and Analysis Budget: \$ 53,833

A) Project Website and Database Maintenance. Both the mnbba.org website, which provides information about the atlas to volunteers and the general public, and the Cornell University data management system, will continue to be operational.

B) Quality Control. Complete data entry, check for completeness, and conduct quality control for all species over the five years of data collection.

C) Statistics and Analysis. Preliminary statistical and GIS analysis and interpretation of the data will be conducted to produce the final products.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Cornell Database	June 30, 2014
2. mnbba project website	June 30, 2015
3. Data Quality Control	June 30, 2014
3. Statistics and Analysis	December 30, 2014

Activity 3: Results Compilation and Distribution Budget: \$366,034

A) Database distribution. Final copies of the finished database will be shared with primary BBA partners including the State of Minnesota.

B) Range Maps. Range maps showing the breeding distribution of each bird species will be produced for presentation in final products.

C) Species summaries will be written for each species we document breeding in Minnesota.

D) Final (online) BBA Website. Upgrade mnbba, or create a separate website with final products including background information on the BBA, distribution maps, species accounts, and links to other information.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Copies of the final database will be made available to primary BBA partners	December 30, 2014
2. An estimated 250 range maps will be produced	March 30, 2015
3. An estimated 250 species summaries will be produced	May 30, 2015
4) A final website will be available to access information	June 30, 2015

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Audubon Minnesota (\$473,300 funds) – Mark Martell, Project Manager, Bonnie Sample, Program Coordinator, oversee data management and collection

Natural Resources Research Institute at the Univ. of MN Duluth (\$170,700 funds) – Dr. Gerald J. Niemi, Professor, systematic point count survey leader.

University of Minnesota (no funds received) - Dr. Scott Lanyon, is Chair of the Steering Committee

Minnesota DNR Division of Ecological Resources and Division of Wildlife and Fisheries (no funds received) – Provide funding and staff time on oversight and technical matters

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (no funds received) – Provide funding and staff time on oversight and technical matters

Minnesota Ornithologists' Union (no funds received) - Provide funding and volunteer time on oversight and technical matters

B. Timeline Requirements: BBA began in 2008 and will require funding for 5 years of data collection and 2 years of analysis and product completions. Field seasons 1&2 (7/2008-6/2010) were funded by ML 2008, Chap. 367, Sec. 2, Subd. 5(d), field seasons 4&5 (7/2010-6/2012) are included in the 2010LCCMR funding bill. This request is for the fifth and final field season (7/2012 – 6/2013) and 2 years of analysis on product production (7/2013 – 6/2015). This will complete the Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

NA

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 3 years

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Personnel:	\$ 486,100
Audubon Project Coordinator - Full time first year, part time years 2&3 \$45,675 salary & 0.33% fringe	\$ 123,325
Administrative Support - part time salary and fringe all 3 years	\$ 2,475
Project Supervisor - part time salary and fringe all 3 years	\$ 8,700
Point Count Survey Technicians - part time, temp, yr 1, 10 staff 6-12 wks@\$600/wk & .10% fringe	\$ 32,400
Statistician - Part time, 1/2 time in yrs 2&3 @ \$50,000 & 0.33 fringe	\$ 66,500
Content Analyst - 2 yrs full time in years 2&3 @ \$50,000 & 0.33 fringe	\$ 133,000
Content Writer and Editor - 2 yrs full time in years 2&3 @ \$45,000 & 0.33 fringe	\$ 119,700
Contracts:	\$ 19,000
Website maintenance and updating	\$ 4,000
Database maintenance - Cornell University	\$ 5,000
Helicopter Services to access road less areas	\$ 10,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Field equipment including maps, GIS units,	\$ 500
Travel: Project Coordinator (\$5,000), Point Count Supervisor (\$4,000, Point Count Technicians (\$42,000), Survey Volunteers (\$80,000)	\$ 131,000
Additional Budget Items:	\$ 7,400
Volunteer Training and Meetings	\$ 5,000
Postage-Mailings of recruitment materials, information, and supplies to volunteers	\$ 400
GIS Time at NRRRI	\$ 2,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 644,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ Audubon Minnesota - \$35,000, Minnesota Ornithologists' Union - \$30,000, USFWS - \$30,000, USFS - \$20,000	\$105,000	Pending
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: MNDNR	\$ 20,000	Pending
In-kind Services During Project Period: Dr. Jerry Niemi salary and fringe	\$ 35,000	Secured
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF 2008 Appropriation (if applicable): on track to spend, 2008 appropriation: ML 2008, Chap. 367, Sec. 2, Subd. 5(d) (\$270,000) on track to spend;	\$ -	
Funding History: 2010 appropriation, Indicate funding secured prior to July 1, 2011 for activities directly relevant to this specific funding request. 2010 appropriation (\$372,000)	\$ 372,000	Not yet legally appropriated

Audubon Minnesota: Organizational Description

Audubon Minnesota is the state office of the National Audubon Society. Established in 1979, we share Audubon's 106-year heritage of working to protect our environment. While we are part of the national organization, we establish our own statewide programs and pursue our own funding for Minnesota efforts. The Audubon Minnesota mission is to conserve and restore Minnesota's natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. Today there are nearly 17,000 Audubon members in Minnesota, organized into 14 geographically-based chapters from Agassiz Audubon Chapter in Thief River Falls to the Coulee Region Audubon Chapter in La Crescent.

Project Manager – Mark Martell, Director of Bird Conservation – Audubon Minnesota. Mark has an M.S. in Wildlife Conservation from the University of Minnesota. He has worked in bird conservation in Minnesota for over 25 at Audubon Minnesota and the Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota. Mark has been project manager on previous LCMR grants most recently the 2007 Breeding Bird Atlas and the 2005 Birding Trails project that produced 3 birding trail guide books for Minnesota. As project director Mark will be responsible for budget and project oversight, ensure full partner participation, and be the direct supervisor of the project coordinator.

