

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

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**LCCMR ID: 079-C3+4**

**Project Title:** Protecting the "Orphan Stretch" of the Mississippi River

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**Category:** C3+4. Technical Assistance and Community-Based Planning

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**Total Project Budget:** \$ \$343,900

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 2 yrs, July 2011 - June 2013

**Other Non-State Funds:** \$ 0

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**Summary:**

Empowering 11 local jurisdictions to adopt river protection strategies in their communities through intensive technical support, and applying conservation measures to high biodiversity riparian properties through customized landowner interactions.

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**Name:** Dennis Fuchs

**Sponsoring Organization:** Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District

**Address:** Marketplace Mall, 110 2nd Street S, Ste 128  
Waite Park MN 56387

**Telephone Number:** 320-251-7800 x3

**Email:** dennis.fuchs@mn.nacdnet.net

**Web Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Location**

**Region:** Central

**Ecological Section:** 212K & 222M

**County Name:** Stearns & Benton

**City / Township:** Rice, St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Sartell; Tow

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_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ Employment	_____ TOTAL _____%

## 2011-2012 MAIN PROPOSAL

**PROJECT TITLE: Protecting the Orphan Stretch of the Mississippi River**

### I. PROJECT STATEMENT

From the Twin Cities to its headwaters, the Mississippi River has benefited from management plans and community efforts to protect shoreland habitat - except for the rapidly-growing area in Central Minnesota that some refer to as the "Orphan Stretch." This river stretch comprises 26 miles of the river between Benton and Stearns Counties north of St. Cloud and is currently governed by 11 local jurisdictions (see map). These communities presently have no coordinated planning or land use controls to protect the magnificent river they share. As a direct result of the work of the Mississippi River Renaissance project, sponsored by the Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District and funded by the Bush and McKnight Foundations, communities in this region have recently rekindled their focus on the Mississippi -beginning with the adoption of a collaboratively developed "Vision for the Future of the Mississippi River in Central Minnesota".

The goal of this project is to restore and protect the natural resource attributes of the Mississippi River and reduce habitat fragmentation along its banks in central Minnesota by assisting the river communities with the development and implementation of specific river protection strategies that support the collaborative vision. The result will be a Mississippi River Protection Toolkit developed by and for the 11 Orphan Stretch communities. The project will assist local units of government in identifying land use tools that best fit their community and to implement those tools. Assistance will be given to develop strategies, including ordinances, that support the vision and to aid communities that have river protection initiatives in their Comprehensive Plans but have not developed further ordinances. Another result will be the development of a landowner registry identifying landowners who desire to restore or protect their Mississippi River shoreline and connecting them to resources for applying conservation measures on their land. This is a critical step in the implementation of voluntary river protection strategies because 86% of land along the Orphan Stretch is privately owned.

### II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

**Activity 1: Increase river protection and restoration through developing customized tools for river conservation among local units of government** **Budget: \$ 224,250**

A toolkit of best practices for river conservation will be compiled by and for local units of government and citizens. This toolkit will be customized for each community and technical assistance will be provided on implementation in their community. Assistance will be given to communities to fully implement river protection vision and goals found in their comprehensive plans.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Develop a slate of tools for river protection – which may include overlay districts, shoreland ordinances, incentives, low impact development standards, conservation design standards, etc. This would be done collaboratively by and for all communities along the Orphan Stretch. The Toolkit will be posted to the project web site, and will be published as an outreach tool for all local units of government.	2011
2. Customize the Toolkit for each community. Conduct 2 personalized training workshops in each community to demonstrate and facilitate the use of the tools within their own jurisdiction. Identify locally acceptable tool(s) for adoption and implementation.	2012
3. Conduct six training sessions (3 per year), by subject topic experts, for local units of government on customized tools that are identified by the communities as priorities for implementation.	2011 -2012
4. Develop and/or refine land use controls based upon the community's customized toolkit and their own existing language in their comprehensive plans that support the Vision for the Future of the Mississippi River.	2012

**Activity 2: Increase the implementation of river conservation toolkit among shoreland property owners**

**Budget: \$ 119,650**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Complete a Landowner Registry data base of landowners that abut the river. Utilize the already complete Natural Resource Inventory along with parcel size to prioritize 200 riparian properties with the highest natural resource value. The data gathered would include: landowner name and contact information, past landowner activities that have supported river health, the landowner's immediate conservation goals and needs, and potential actions that they could take to protect or improve the health of the river. Information would be gathered through personal conversations with landowners along the river.	100 landowners, 2011 100 landowners, 2012
2. Identify conservation implementation opportunities based upon the landowner registry and coordinate the delivery of technical and financial resources to implement the conservation measures. The Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District will leverage existing cost share opportunities provided by BWSR grants and USDA Farm Bill programs that could result in shoreland restoration, bio-retention practices, and prairie restoration.	2011-2012
3. Conduct two river conservation field days for landowners, one each in the urban and rural reaches of the river to demonstrate the use of the conservation tool kit.	2012

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

**Project Team**

**Stearns County Soil & Water Cons. District**

Dennis Fuchs, Administrator,

Kimberly Thielen Cremers, Miss. River Renaissance Coordinator

LCCMR Recipient

Cost Share Contributor

The Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District will coordinate all activities for this grant and will act as fiscal agent. They will also provide cost share funds for conservation practices identified through landowner registry.

**Minnesota Waters** – Marian Bender

Advisory

**CR Planning** – Jean Coleman

Advisory

**MN Department of Natural Resources** – Mark Hauck, Sharon Pfeifer

Advisory

**Initiative Foundation** – Don Hickman

Advisory

**Partners**

**U of MN Extensions (NEMO Program)** – John Bilotta

LCCMR Funded Partner

**Local Units of Government**-Stearns & Benton County,

Implementation Asst.

Cities of Rice, St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Sartell; Townships of Sauk

Rapids, Watab, Langola, LeSauk and Brockway

**B. Timeline Requirements**

This project is expected to take two full years (24 months) to complete.

**C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs**

This proposal is a component of a long term effort that began in 2004. The project to date has: gathered and distributed Natural Resource Inventory data; facilitated the use of NRI in conservation plans for Sartell and Sauk Rapids; educated local officials through multiple meetings and presentations in each of the 11 communities; hosted 'on river' community events including a BioBlitz, boat tours, and "Take a Day Off on the River"; led a visioning process; worked to gain unanimous acceptance of the vision; and will be authoring goals that support the vision. It is expected that continued restoration and protection of riparian lands in the Orphan Stretch will be undertaken after this proposal concludes. Funding from foundations, individuals, and local government will be sought to support cost share and to provide funding for land acquisition easement acquisition, and other implementation activities. Local capacity will be identified to support land and easement acquisition activities.

## 2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

### IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET - Two (2) years

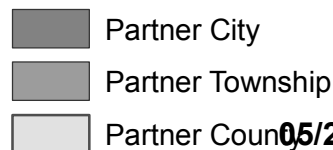
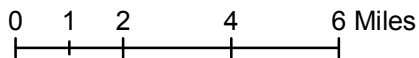
BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
<b>Personnel:</b> Mississippi River Coordinator, currently on soft dollar, at Stearns County SWCD - 100% <b>Inputs:</b> Salary = 70%, Benefits = 30%, two (2) years funded, one (1) person in this position.	\$ 187,200
<b>Contracts:</b>	\$ -
<b>Land-use Consultant/Project Manager-</b> To develop a customized toolkit for river protection, which may include overlay districts, shoreland ordinances, incentives, low impact development standards, conservation design standards, etc. This would be done collaboratively by and for all communities along the Orphan Stretch. Conduct 2 personalized training workshops in each community to demonstrate and facilitate the use of the tools within their own jurisdiction. Identify locally acceptable tool(s) for adoption and implementation.	\$ 117,500
<b>Ecologists-</b> (~20 hrs) To assist the project manager in the develop a toolkit of best management practices (BMP's) for river conservation for local units of government and citizens.	\$ 2,800
<b>Engineer-</b> (~20 hrs) To assist the project manager in the develop a toolkit of best management practices (BMP's) for river conservation for local units of government and citizens.	\$ 2,400
<b>Landscape Architect-</b> (~20 hrs) To assist the project manager in the develop a toolkit of best management practices (BMP's) for river conservation for local units of government and citizens.	\$ 2,000
<b>GIS Consultant-</b> Utilize existing Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) Data, Land-use categories, and demographic trends to determine Land-owner registry priorities, and toolkit implementation areas of greatest concern.	\$ 11,200
<b>Toolkit Graphics and Technical Writer-</b> Development audience specific easy to use guides of the toolkit for both Local units of Government and river property owners	\$ 10,000
<b>Subject Experts/Consultants to assist in 6 toolkit training workshops (3 per/yr) and two landowner field days-</b> To train Local Government Units and River landowners on locally acceptable Toolkit options.	\$ 4,600
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b>	
<b>In-state Travel Expenses:</b> Mileage: 30mi x \$0.50 x 200 river landowner visits	\$ 3,000
<b>Printing:</b> 100 Toolkit guides x \$10/copy & 2,000 brochures for riparian landowners on best management practices related to the toolkit	\$ 3,200
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT &amp; NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST</b>	<b>\$ 343,900</b>

### V. OTHER FUNDS

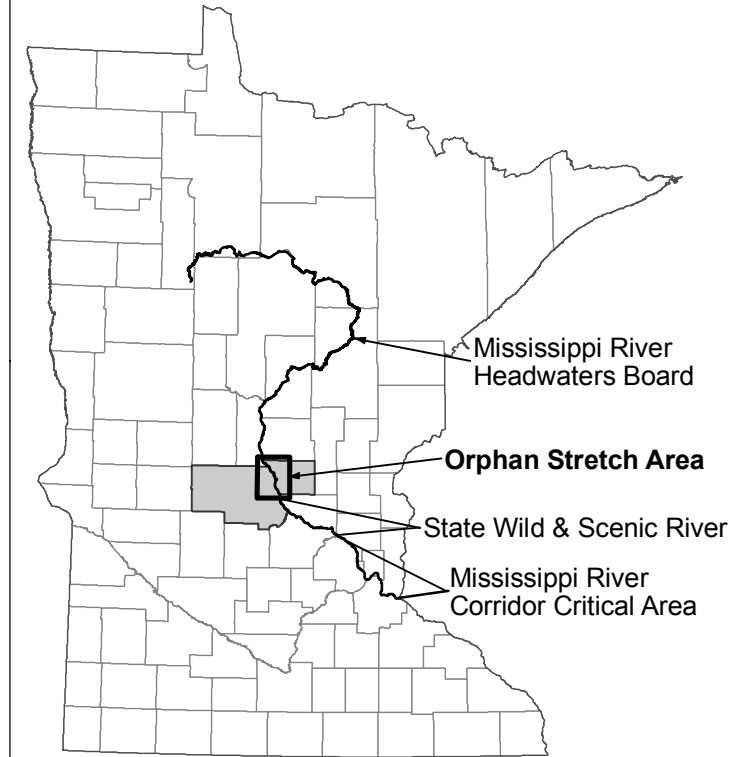
SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
<b>Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b> \$50,000 <i>USDA Farm Bill Programs</i>	\$ 50,000	<i>Pending</i>
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period:</b> <i>Stearns County SWCD in the form of other staff, supplies, automobile, postage, facility rentals and meals= \$28,000, DNR Community Assistance Program Staff = \$25,000</i>	\$ 53,000	
<b>Funding History:</b> <i>Mid-MN Mississippi RC&amp;D (\$1,000), Bush Foundation(\$65,000), McKnight Foundation (\$175,000), DNR Greenway Planning Grant (\$30,000), NRI-Sartell, Sauk Rapids (~\$17,000), Initiative Foundation (~\$16,000), St. Cloud Emerging Leaders Forum (\$1,800) Sauk Rapids Sportsman's Club (\$3,000)</i>	\$ 308,800	

# Protecting the Orphan Stretch of the Mississippi River

## Orphan Stretch Area



## Location of Area in Minnesota



Communities	Population, 2000	Linear River Miles, 2009
<b>Benton County</b>	<b>34,226</b>	
Langola Township	916	8.5
Watab Township	2,920	9.3
Sauk Rapids Township	723	0.8
City of Rice	711	0.7
<b>Stearns County</b>	<b>133,166</b>	
Brockway Township	2,551	10.5
LeSauk Township	1,880	4.6
<b>Urban Areas</b>		
City of Sartell	9,641	2.5
City of Sauk Rapids	10,213	3.1
City of Saint Cloud	59,107	3.0
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>167,392</b>	
<b>Total Linear Miles</b>	<b>167.392</b>	<b>26.4</b>

## Vitae

Dennis J. Fuchs, District Administrator  
Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District  
110 Second Street South, Suite 128  
Waite Park, MN 56387  
ph. 320-251-7800 x 132    fx: 320-251-9171  
email: [dennis.fuchs@mn.nacdnet.net](mailto:dennis.fuchs@mn.nacdnet.net)

### Work Experience:

STEARNS COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
(website: <http://www.stearnscountyswcd.net/> )  
Waite Park, MN. District Administrator, 1996-present.

Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District, Organization Description:

The Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District's (SWCD) mission is to provide local leadership in the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources through programs and partnerships with individuals, businesses, organizations, and government

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE St. Paul, MN. Soil Scientist, 1994-1996.  
Assisted local and state units of government in evaluating agricultural nutrient management practices on water quality Designed and coordinated a variety of "Best Management Practices" implementation programs with organizations such as the Minnesota Extension Service, Soil and Water Conservation District, and Clean Water Partnership staff. Worked on LCMR funded demonstration projects, such as, field-scale paired-watershed comparison between Variable Rate Technology (VRT) and conventional technology

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA--SOUTHWEST EXPERIMENT STATION Lamberton, MN.  
Scientist, 1988-1994.

Assisted in the supervision of all plot work, full-time technicians and part-time summer employees. Conducted research in specialized areas of soil science and agronomy, including site specific research and soil erosion management. Statistically analyzed, summarized and reported research findings

### Education

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, St. Paul, MN. 1986-1988

Master of Agriculture, Soil Science; Hydrology Minor

Master project; extensive study of earthworm distribution in MN and effect on soil properties

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, St. Paul, MN. 1983-1986

B.S. degree, Agronomy; Applied Agricultural Economics Minor

### Organizations/Committees

- Certified Crop Adviser
- Licensed Professional Soil Scientist
- Soil and Water Conservation Society member
- American Society of Agronomy & Soil Science member
- MN Agriculture Rural Leadership alumni member
- Pheasants Forever member
- National Wild Turkey Federation member