

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

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**LCCMR ID: 082-C3+4**

**Project Title:** St. Croix Basin Protection: Coordinated, Innovative, Targeted

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

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**Total Project Budget: \$** \$1,180,000

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

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

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**Summary:**

This initiative will create a coordinated, innovative and targeted system for St. Croix Basin protection and implement 20 projects that demonstrate the benefits and efficiencies possible through the new paradigm.

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**Name:** Deb Ryun

**Sponsoring Organization:** St. Croix River Association

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**Location**

**Region:** NE, Metro

**Ecological Section:** Western Superior Uplands (212K), Minnesota and NE Iowa Morainal (222M)

**County Name:** Aitkin, Anoka, Carlton, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Pine, Washington

**City / Township:**

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<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"/> %

# 2011-2012 MAIN PROPOSAL

**PROJECT TITLE:** St. Croix Basin Protection: Coordinated, Innovative, Targeted

## I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The St. Croix River basin encompasses 3,500-square miles in Minnesota, extending from forests in Carlton and Aitkin Counties, through the agricultural areas of Pine and Chisago Counties, and down to the rapidly developing communities within Washington County. Though treasured for its clean water quality and abundant wildlife habitat, the St. Croix is threatened by pollution from poorly planned development, forest fragmentation, agricultural runoff and inappropriate recreational uses. In fact, American Rivers recently deemed it one of the country's ten most endangered rivers.

This project is designed to establish and implement a new paradigm that will catalyze protection of the St. Croix Basin. Building on existing work underway (by the St. Croix Basin Team, communities, agencies and others), the St. Croix River Association (SCRA) and its partners will demonstrate how local, state and federal governments and nonprofits can achieve more by working more strategically and collaboratively. The project is supported by key basin stakeholders who have made a commitment to refine the way they invest staff time and resources in the basin. Support is needed to set up and begin implementing this innovative new initiative.

As a result of this project, government programs will more efficiently target their conservation investments, complementing but not implementing Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) work; citizens, local governments and landowners will become more actively engaged in conservation; and on-the-ground projects will generate measurable land and water improvements. We will achieve these goals by 1) synthesizing existing data and leveraging state and local expertise to establish agreed upon priority areas where improvements can generate multiple benefits; 2) developing a detailed workplan and coordinated system that directs the efforts of basin partners to achieve priority improvements; and 3) providing outreach, technical assistance and incentives needed to implement up to 20 site-specific projects that demonstrate the multi ecosystem/social benefits and efficiencies possible through this new paradigm. The priorities and new collaborative systems developed through the project will be used by basin stakeholders over the long term and will help us leverage implementation investments from federal and other sources.

## II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

**Activity 1:** Establish priority areas and framework for collaborative implementation **Budget:** \$575,000  
SCRA and its partners will use existing data, analysis models and expertise to target areas and actions that will achieve multiple social and environmental benefits in the basin including conserving natural resources, improving water quality, supporting economic growth and providing high-quality recreation opportunities. Analysis will identify priority areas and focus implementation efforts to maximize benefits by defining priorities at multiple scales, including the basin, sub-basin and site scale. An integrated protection framework/workplan will be developed identifying what actions are needed, where they will be implemented and how multiple organizations can work across jurisdictions to complete the needed actions. Activity results will set the stage for implementing catalytic projects, identify longer term priorities and establish a collaborative system that will become the new method of operation in the basin.

Outcome	Completion
1. Pertinent existing plans and studies reviewed and cataloged.	12/31/2011
2. Basinwide analysis completed, identifying priority landscapes and developing social and biological indicators that resonate with citizens, resource managers and land use authorities. (Indicators also will form the basis of a baseline health assessment that will be shared with partners and updated annually.)	6/30/2012
3. Integrated protection framework/workplan completed (through analysis of current systems and development of new agreed-upon collaborative structure) to guide resource management in the basin.	12/31/2012
4. Activities identified in the framework and prioritization process integrated into	6/30/2013

agency/organization workplans.	
5. Within priority landscapes, 10-12 priority catchment/subcatchment basins analyzed and practices identified for achieving multiple resource benefits.	12/31/2013

**Activity 2: Motivate and implement land/water solutions**

**Budget: \$605,000**

Within priority areas identified in Activity 1, we will use innovative, motivational outreach and incentive mechanisms to gain community and landowner support for implementing targeted conservation strategies and projects. We will use conservation design, financial assistance, public engagement and construction drawings to achieve implementation of 20 on-the-ground practices. The targeted implemented projects will create measurable improvements in water quality and habitat value and demonstrate that increased results and efficiencies can be achieved through a collaborative model that considers multiple resource benefits, works across region to site scales and engages the public and management partners at all levels.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion</b>
1. Priority strategies identified to influence behavior (information and regulation) and incent public and private land/water stewardship that improves environmental quality.	6/30/13
2. Using a community engagement process, designs completed for 4-8 high-priority, high-visibility landscapes. Designs will demonstrate conservation strategies at the landscape, community and site scales and will include materials (maps, diagrams, brochures, etc.) that support outreach and motivational efforts.	6/30/13
3. Targeted outreach conducted to increase awareness of basin issues, motivate behavior change and maximize implementation of conservation practices on both private and public lands in priority areas.	6/30/13
4. 20 targeted management practices designed and implemented as a result of barrier shattering incentive programs and outreach approaches.	6/30/14
5. Project results measured/shared in the basin, with partners and other interested parties.	6/30/14

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

- SCRA is the sponsoring organization and will manage the project. (See attached for details.)
- MN DNR will receive funds for a new unclassified position to serve as a St. Croix Project Liaison. This position will leverage in-kind the work of two full time employees from the division of Eco/Waters, with additional staff from the other divisions.
- U of MN Center for Changing Landscapes will create visual materials and designs at site and community scales, engaging citizens and establishing plans that will be implemented by local implementers and landowners.
- Conservation St. Croix (CSC), a partnership of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the St. Croix Basin, will receive funds to identify local priorities and implement projects on the ground. CSC will also provide in-kind technical assistance to support the project.
- BWSR will provide in-kind project participation. BWSR manages significant state funding for conservation and this project will help target those resources.

**B. Timeline Requirements**

Three years from start of funding is requested to complete all deliverables.

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

Once this project is completed, the collaborative approach will become the new “business as usual” for stakeholders, shape how they make their investments in the basin and establish priorities for funding requests from federal sources and others. Successful completion of the project will stimulate and inform similar efforts in Wisconsin. SCRA will continue to facilitate coordinated work across the basin and leverage additional funding.

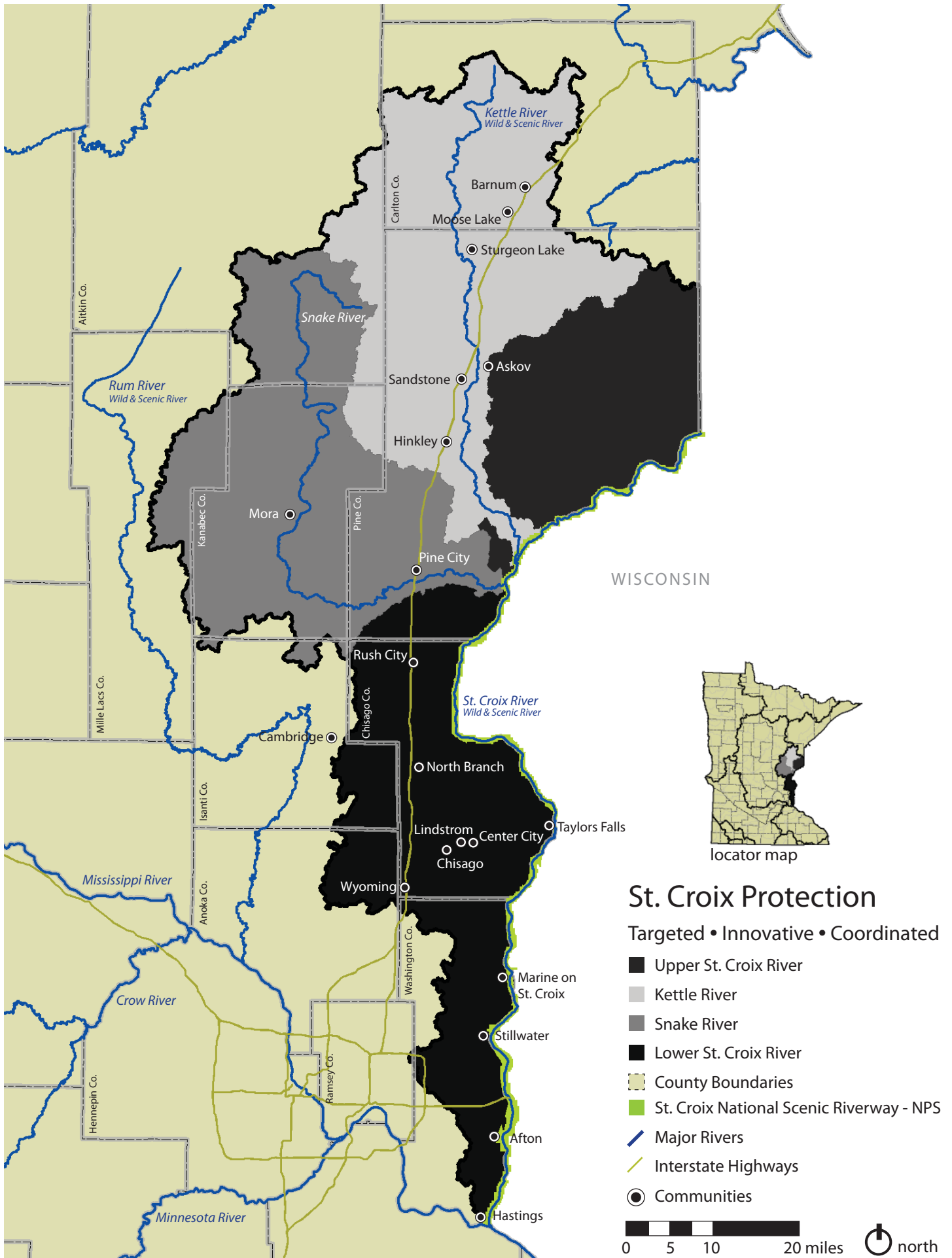
**2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget**

**IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET years 3**

<b>BUDGET ITEM</b> (See list of Eligible & Non-Eligible Costs, p. 13)	<b>AMOUNT</b>
<b>Personnel:</b> <u>St. Croix River Association (SCRA):</u> A new 0.8 FTE Conservation Coordinator for 3 years to provide direct facilitation of collaborative activities \$198,000; and 0.25 Program Assistant \$27,000 (Both positions 80% salary/20% benefits). SCRA total: \$225,000 <span style="float: right;"><u>MN</u></span> <u>DNR:</u> Marybeth Block in a new 0.75 FTE (unclassified) St. Croix Project Liaison position for 3 years to lead the identification of priority landscapes, develop indicators and solicit project involvement of experts within DNR Divisions & Bureaus. \$195,000 (72% salary/ 28% benefits). <u>Conservation St. Croix (CSC):</u> Personnel distributed among the MN counties in the basin to identify local priorities and implement projects on the ground (Jay Riggs and Pete Young, Washington; Craig Mell, Chisago; Shawn Tracy Akota and other to be determined) \$274,000 (All positions 70% salary and 30% benefits) <u>U of MN Center for Changing Landscapes (CCL):</u> Co-Director Mary Vogel 16% for 3 years \$50,000 (94% salary/6% benefits); 2 Research Fellows 42% for 2 years \$119,000 (83% salary/17% benefits); Senior Research Fellows 250 hrs at \$80.10/hr \$20,000 (94% salary/6% benefits); Support Staff average 1.8% FTE \$5,000 (71% salary/29% benefits) CCL total: \$194,000.	\$ 888,000
<b>Contracts:</b> DNR Bureau of Management Information Services GIS support for prioritizing landscapes, developing indicators and community analysis \$75,000 DNR Bureau of Creative Services to assist with creating illustrations and visuals for the social and biological indicators and other outreach activities \$25,000 Graphic design for outreach materials \$20,000	\$ 120,000
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> Drafting supplies, photographic material, printing services for public outreach and meeting materials	\$ 10,000
<b>Travel:</b> Mileage reimbursement for staff to travel to communities, meetings and events associated with this project	\$ 12,000
	\$ 150,000
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT &amp; NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST</b>	<b>\$ 1,180,000</b>

**V. OTHER FUNDS**

<b>SOURCE OF FUNDS</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b> SCRA and partners will work to leverage significant non-state funds for the project. Currently, private foundation support for this project is pending from individual private donors \$15,000 and will be pending as of fall 2010 from The McKnight Foundation \$30,000. The National Park Service, SCRA and other partners will pursue federal funding for the project though no proposals are currently pending.	\$ 45,000	<i>Pending</i>
<b>Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b> MN DNR Shared Services (human resources, computer and other expenses associated with a position). \$12,800. Additionally, the collaborative systems development and prioritizing work conducted through this project will set the stage for leveraging implementation funds from state sources including BWSR cost share and Clean Water, Land and Legacy.	\$ 12,800	N/A
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period:</b> <u>MN DNR:</u> 2.0 FTE for 3 years from DNR Division of Eco/Waters (hydrologists, ecologists, community specialists) \$375,000; and .25 FTE for 3 years from Regional Operations (planner, communications) \$50,000. DNR total in-kind: \$425,000 <u>CSC:</u> Staff time for subwatershed assessments and outreach support provided by the East Metro Water Resource Education Program \$60,000; state cost share funds for project implementation through Soil and Water Conservation Districts in CSC \$50,000. Total CSC in-kind: \$110,000 <u>BWSR:</u> 0.3 FTE staff participation in project \$35,000	\$ 570,000	



## **St. Croix Basin Protection: Coordinated, Innovative, Targeted**

### **Project Manager Qualifications**

Deb Ryun, Executive Director of the St. Croix River Association (SCRA), will act as project manager. In this role she will provide oversight of the project as a whole and manage the Conservation Coordinator who will be hired to staff the effort. Extensive past experience and her work to date at SCRA have provided Ryun with key skills needed for this project, including: management and coordination of multi-stakeholder initiatives; watershed-level planning; and implementation of on-the-ground projects to protect land and water. Prior to joining SCRA, Ryun served as Executive Director for Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI), a non-profit organization working to conserve and enhance soil and water resources on private working lands. While at CDI she was appointed by former Governor Tom Vilsack to serve as a member of numerous key committees and she recently served as co-chair of Iowa's Water, Land and Legacy committee. Ryun graduated from Coe College with a self-designed degree in environmental studies. Her previous job experience includes work as a naturalist for the Linn County Conservation Department and as communication and education coordinator for Trees Forever in Marion, Iowa.

This project also will benefit from the expertise of partnering staff:

- Marybeth Block, DNR St. Croix Basin Project Liaison, has experience managing LCCMR projects - most recently the MeCC DNR Metro Greenways Grant Program and in the past BWSR's Local Water Management Matching Challenge Grant Program. Block's experience working for local government and with private land owners to implement conservation practices will help her effectively orchestrate DNR resources to carry out this project.
- Jay Riggs, Manager of the Washington Conservation District (WCD), has extensive experience coordinating District activities with watersheds and local units of government and providing technical support for natural resource inventories, innovative stormwater management and implementation of conservation projects improvements. He is a Certified Professional in Storm Water Quality, member of the Minnesota State Stormwater Steering Committee and chair of the Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS) Workgroup.
- Mary Vogel is a designer with extensive experience in looking at the interface between environmental issues and recreational facilities/highway/community design. Her work has been recognized for its design excellence and has been implemented all across the state. She has led design teams that have received four honor awards and one award of excellence from the Minnesota Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects.

### **Organization Description**

The mission of the SCRA is to protect, restore and celebrate the St. Croix River and its watershed. Founded in 1911, SCRA began a significant transformation in 2008, moving from a volunteer organization to a more active leader with the appropriate vision, governance and resources. This transformation was stimulated by a widely-acknowledged need for an organization focused specifically on protecting and improving the St. Croix River and its basin.

SCRA works closely with the National Park Service, nonprofits and state and local governments. We also support and collaborate with existing partnerships, including the St. Croix Conservation Collaborative, a working group initiated by SCRA in 2005 to increase collaboration among groups working on land protection in the basin; and the St. Croix Basin Water Resources Planning team (Basin Team), which was formed in 1993 by the agencies overseeing the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway and has led water quality research and established a basin-wide goal of reducing phosphorous pollution to the river by 20 percent. (SCRA is currently partnering with the Basin Team to administer \$500,000 in Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment funds for water quality testing and implementation work on the St. Croix.) These existing partners will be closely engaged in work on this project through SCRA's coordination.

SCRA is committed to applying the systems developed through this project over the long-term — and across the entire basin, including Wisconsin — and leading work to leverage funds from private, federal and other sources.