

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

LCCMR ID: 085-C3+4

Project Title: Minnesota Conservation Training Network

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

Total Project Budget: \$ \$425,000

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 150,000

Summary:

This project will increase the pace, quality and permanency of land and water protection by developing a comprehensive training curriculum and networking platform for 400-500 land acquisition professionals.

Name: Kris Larson

Sponsoring Organization: Minnesota Land Trust

Address: 2356 University Ave W, Ste 240
Saint Paul MN 55114

Telephone Number: 651-647-9590

Email: klarson@mnland.org

Web Address: www.mnland.org

Location

Region: Statewide

Ecological Section: Minnesota and NE Iowa Morainal (222M)

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 _____%

2011-2012 MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota Conservation Training Network

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The protection of Minnesota's land and water resources requires that all parties engaged in conservation land transactions and conservation easements be as knowledgeable and highly-skilled as possible. Unfortunately, unlike other states, Minnesota does not currently have an organized and effective system for educating professionals from the different fields involved in conservation real-estate projects. This could result in short-term concerns with the legal integrity of pending projects and their financing and/or long-term concerns with defending the permanency of existing conservation properties or easements.

The Minnesota Land Trust proposes to address this problem by creating the Minnesota Conservation Training Network. The long-term goal of the Conservation Training Network is to increase the *pace, quality and permanency* of Minnesota's land and water protection efforts by developing a comprehensive training curriculum and reaching 400-500 conservation-related professionals in the first three years of the project. Moreover, we intend to keep these professionals networked and engaged long after the term of this initial phase of the project. The audiences will include the parties typically engaged in conservation real-estate transactions, including appraisers, attorneys, tax and estate advisors, conservation staff, planners, realtors and others.

It is more urgent than ever that these professionals have the knowledge and capacity to deliver on the promise to protect Minnesota's natural heritage. Thanks to new funding sources and plans, such as the State Conservation and Preservation Plan, there is increased opportunity to deliver on the State's conservation goals. However, land transactions have become more legally complex, there is increased state and national scrutiny, and accountability to national standards and practices is of utmost importance. All of this requires a trained, inspired and sustainable network of talented professionals.

This project will be informed by the Minnesota Land Trust's and our partners' successful history of delivering relevant educational efforts. The direct outcomes of this project will be to:

1. Improve the *technical skills* of professionals engaged in conservation
2. Increase the *knowledge of emerging issues* and relevant state/national concerns; and
3. Provide a forum for *continued networking* and information exchange

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Refinement of Curriculum **Budget:** \$95,000

An advisory group will be formed to help refine the curriculum content, delivery mechanisms, evaluation, and plan for sustainability. The group will be selected at the initiation of the project by the project partners listed in Section III and will include the following types of entities:

Appraiser	Real Estate Attorney	DNR/BWSR
Tax/Trust Attorney	Higher Education (UofM, etc)	Water organization
Sportsmen's Group	Land Planner	Others as identified

Outcomes	Completion Date
1. Analyze other training opportunities in the state and country	<i>Dec. 2011</i>
2. Establish Advisory Group	<i>Dec. 2011</i>
3. Refine Curriculum, Plan Delivery Approach, Develop Communications	<i>June 2012</i>

Activity 2: Implementation of Trainings Budget: \$330,000

While the detailed implementation approach will be refined in Activity 1, the implementation strategy will include a five-part approach:

1. Delivery of content at 5-7 existing professional trainings/conferences in Minnesota, such as the Real Estate Law Conference, state appraiser trainings, MN Water's conference, MN American Planning Association Conference, and others
2. Implementation of 2-4 regional, in-person workshops that will deliver content appropriate to the needs of that region
3. Development of 3-5 webinars or teleconferences which will reach audiences in a cost-effective and convenient format, resulting in maximum participation
4. Hosting the Conservation Summit as a semi-annual, larger state-wide conference aimed at informing the attendees on the latest emerging issues and establishing a predictable vehicle for sharing experiences between the various disciplines
5. Creation of an on-going networking format, including e-newsletters, facebook, etc. in order to provide for continued information exchange between professionals

These five approaches will require professional presenters; targeted promotion; adequate facilities (for in-person sessions); technological hosting (for web-based sessions and networking); materials development; and detailed evaluations.

Outcomes	Completion Date
1. Implement the 5-part strategy outlined above	<i>June 2014</i>
2. Evaluate the success of the strategies and develop plan for sustaining them beyond the term of the grant	<i>June 2014</i>

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

The Minnesota Land Trust is the lead organization on this project, providing overall project coordination. The three project partners who will formally assist the Land Trust are: Government Training Services (conference/workshop logistics); Conservation Minnesota (media/networking implementation); and The Land Trust Alliance (curriculum development).

B. Timeline Requirements

The first phase of this project—the refinement of the curriculum—is intended to be completed by June of 2012. The completion of the second phase—the implementation of the trainings—will be somewhat dependent upon the schedules of other conferences and training sessions. As such, we have indicated that it will be completed no later than June of 2014.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

This project is intended to develop a long-term program which will exist into the future beyond the funding of the ENRTF. We anticipate that a sustainability strategy will include:

1. Institutionalizing conservation as a component of regular training conferences
2. Securing private funding and sponsorships
3. Charging reasonable fees for attendance at workshops/conferences

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

Minnesota Land Trust - Minnesota Conservation Training Network

IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel: MLT Staff expenses including salaries, benefits (FICA,FUTA. SUI, worker's comp health insurance, 401 (k), etc.) and related costs for approximately 1.5 FTE as follows: Project Coordinator (approximately 1 new FTE) and other existing staff (approximately .5 FTE).	\$ 315,000
Contracts: Professional Services, including: curriculum/network development (\$66,000); speakers (\$16,000); training facilities/logistics (\$8,000); graphic designer (\$5,000).	\$ 95,000
Training Materials and Printing: Printing and/or purchase of necessary training materials	\$ 10,000
Travel: Mileage and related travel expenses in Minnesota.	\$ 5,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 425,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: It is anticipated that there will be approximately \$150,000 in other non-state funding between Minnesota Land Trust operating funds, fees for workshops/conferences and donations/sponsorships.	\$ 150,000	pending
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:	n/a	
In-kind Services During Project Period: While the Land Trust does not itemize the specific value of in-kind services, substantial amounts of volunteer in-kind services are anticipated as part of the Advisory Group, Project Partners and conference/workshop speakers and volunteers	\$ 10,000	pending
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable):	n/a	
Funding History:	n/a	



Minnesota Land Trust

*Our land. Our water. Our future.
Some things should be forever.*

Minnesota Land Trust Organizational Overview

The Minnesota Land Trust preserves Minnesota's natural and scenic heritage through public and private partnerships. A 501(c)(3) public charity, the Minnesota Land Trust has been working with landowners and local communities since 1991 through the following three strategies:

- **PROTECT:** Directly protecting land through conservation easements, land acquisition and effective land management.
- **ASSIST:** Providing agencies, communities and organizations with assistance in planning and delivering on-the-ground conservation in order to expand the State's overall capacity.
- **ENGAGE:** Helping to foster a culture of conservation, to support enhanced conservation legislation and funding, and to ensure the state has highly-skilled, trained professionals.

As a statewide land trust, the Minnesota Land Trust has created a regional structure to deliver its programs effectively at a local level, with offices in Duluth, Ely, Red Wing and St. Paul. The Land Trust was one of first land trusts in the country to be accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and has also been recognized by the Charities Review Council as meeting all of its standards. The Minnesota Land Trust has developed or presented at more than 100 trainings through its nearly 20-year history, including the Conservation Summit, the statewide conservation conference.

Project Partners

Government Training Services: a Minnesota non-profit which has a 32-year history of delivering quality trainings and workshops for planning, conservation and other issues around State.

Conservation Minnesota: a Minnesota non-profit which provides a full set of tools, information and strategies to help Minnesotans protect our lakes, lands and way of life, with expertise in networking.

The Land Trust Alliance: A national leader on conservation training and coordination, with decades of experience in developing and delivering land transaction curriculum around the country.

Staff Qualifications

The Minnesota Land Trust employs 10 staff, relies on the skills of nearly 100 dedicated volunteers, and is governed by an active 17-member Board of Directors.

Kris Larson serves as Executive Director for the Minnesota Land Trust. He has worked for the Minnesota Land Trust in several capacities for more than a decade, including interim Executive Director, Director of Conservation Programs, Conservation Planning Director and Regional Conservation Director for the northern region. Kris has also served as the Executive Director for the Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts, where he oversaw all the organization's operations and services for more than sixty land trusts and government open space programs. Kris also gained valuable experience in land conservation while at the Brandywine Conservancy in Pennsylvania prior to coming to Minnesota in 1998. He has extensive experience organizing and delivering educational programs at state and national level and helped the Minnesota Land Trust launch the Conservation Summit in 2007. He has a bachelor's degree from Carleton College and a master's degree in Landscape Architecture from the School of Environmental Design, University of Georgia.

