

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

LCCMR ID: 104-D-2.1

Project Title: 2.1 - MeCC 6 - Restore and Enhance Significant Watershed Habitat

Category: D. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Total Project Budget: \$ 232,600

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 135,000

Summary:

Improve and increase habitat by restoring and enhancing 200 acres of prairie and woodland/forest. We will also reach out to and assist 27 landowners to expand existing projects.

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Sponsoring Organization: Friends of the Mississippi River

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Location

Region: Metro

Ecological Section: Paleozoic Plateau (222L), Minnesota and NE Iowa Morainal (222M)

County Name: Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington

City / Township: Marshan, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Hastings,

_____ 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: MeCC6–2.3 Restore and Enhance Significant Watershed Habitat

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Friends of the Mississippi River has been conducting enhancement/restoration and permanent land protection activities on some of the most important and highest quality habitat within the core metro and southeastern metro corridors for over ten years. The landowner outreach, restoration and enhancement activities presented in this proposal are designed to build on this earlier work, helping to ensure that previous public investment in this habitat improvement is protected and added to. We have focused our work on particular locations within the designated corridors. As a result, we enjoy a high level of momentum in increasing the size and health of the habitat of these natural areas. Many of the crucial components of these projects are in place. Natural resource management plans have been or are being developed, close relationships have been built with the landowners and partners and our staff know the sites well. With this funding we can continue the habitat restoration in a seamless fashion allowing us to benefit from a project infrastructure that is in place.

We will seek to build on the previous successes by reaching out to other landowners in the metro corridors to present land conservation information and to ascertain the landowner's interest in pursuing restoration and/or permanent land protection, through acquisition of fee title and conservation easements. It is through this outreach that we are able to develop future permanent land protection and habitat restoration projects.

There are three overall goals for this project: One goal is to increase the amount of high quality habitat within designated conservation corridors. Two outcomes of this goal are the restoration of 55-acres of prairie and the restoration of 5-acres of woodland habitat. Specific activities associated with these outcomes include updating management plans, soil preparation including herbicide, burning, and discing, seed/plant installation, followed by mowing, and weed control. A second goal is to enhance the quality of existing habitat areas. A primary outcome is removal of exotic, invasive woody species from 140-acres of existing prairie and woodlands. Activities associated with this outcome include updating management plans, cut/treat invasives and prescribed burning.

A third goal is to develop a list of potential future restoration and acquisition projects within the corridors. Expected outcomes are to increase the number of permanently protected parcels adjacent to existing permanently protected sites and increase the number of acres of high quality habitat. Specific activities include identifying and contacting landowners in proximity to existing projects, meeting with these landowners and sharing natural resource and permanent land protection information.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Restoration of ecological habitat **Budget \$ 232,600**

Restore 55 acres of prairie on former agricultural lands. Specific actions include tree removal, prescribed burning, soil preparation, seeding, herbicide application and mowing. Volunteers will be engaged to assist in seed collection. We will evaluate the effectiveness of these restoration actions by conducting periodic site visits to monitor germination success and the occurrence of exotic invasive plants and by documenting bird species. These restoration actions will take place at the Emrick property, Hastings Sand Coulee SNA, the Hastings WMA, and the Gores Pool WMA.

Enhance 41 acres of existing prairie by conducting weed control and prescribed burns on three sites. Volunteers will be engaged to assist in weed control. We will evaluate the effectiveness of these burns by conducting periodic monitoring visits to assess native and non-native plants as well as bird species. These sites include Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area, Grey Cloud Dunes SNA and Hastings Sand Coulee SNA.

Enhance and restore 104 acres of forest/woodland by taking actions to control exotic invasive plants and by planting native trees & shrubs. Volunteers may be utilized to remove exotic invasive plants and to install native plants. There are a number of sites where we will conduct woodland restoration activities. We will evaluate the effectiveness of these restoration/enhancement actions by conducting periodic site visits to monitor success of control methods and resprouting/germination of exotic plants and survival rate of installed native plants. We will document use of these specific sites by bird species.

Contact 27 landowners to discuss the natural resources on their property, provide information on restoration options, permanent land protection options, and solicit their involvement in habitat improvement. FMR will begin to plan habitat restoration activities with interested landowners and will solicit the involvement of other MeCC partners on projects in which the landowner indicates an interest in pursuing permanent protection for their property through fee title acquisition or a conservation easement.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Conduct prairie restoration activities on 55 acres.	6/30/2013
2. Conduct habitat enhancement activities on 41 acres of existing prairie	6/30/2013
3. Conduct restoration and enhancement activities on 104 acres of forest/woodland.	6/30/2013
4. Contact 27 landowners and meet with as many as are interested in doing so. Develop a spreadsheet that reports which landowners were contacted, meetings held, and landowners interested in pursuing restoration and/or protection activities.	6/30/2013

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

The FMR project team consists of the Conservation Director-Tom Lewanski, Ecologist and Project Manager-Karen Schik, Volunteer Coordinator-Sue Rich and Stewardship Coordinator-Karen Solas. Salary and benefits of these staff will be supported by the Trust Fund appropriation.

Trust Fund will be used for restoration activities on these partner’s properties: The National Park Service, Macalester College, Minneapolis Park Board, St. Paul Parks, The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, several private landowners and the City of Inver Grove Heights. These entities, along with Dakota County, the Vermillion River Joint Powers Organization, Minneapolis neighborhood associations, watershed districts, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and community volunteers will contribute resources to restoration and enhancement projects from non-Trust Fund sources.

B. Timeline Requirements

As presented in this proposal FMR will work to meet the stated outcomes between the July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2013 timeframe.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

FMR has been strategically focused on specific areas within the designated corridors for well over a decade. This approach has allowed us to stay engaged with projects, landowners, partners and communities, helping to ensure the continuous improvement and expansion of the habitat values at these sites, over time, while protecting the public investment that has been made in them. As such the restoration and enhancement projects presented in this proposal are all part of larger projects both in the sense of time and area. Many times these projects involve restoration and protection components. We feel that the Trust Fund is an important, but not the sole, source of funds for these projects. We are committed to raising the non-Trust Fund funds required to stay involved in these projects into the future. Most of these projects are situated along the Mississippi River corridor or along important tributaries and thus are of statewide significance. Examples of these larger established projects include the Sand Coulee prairie, the Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area, the Mississippi River gorge, and the Vermillion River corridor.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

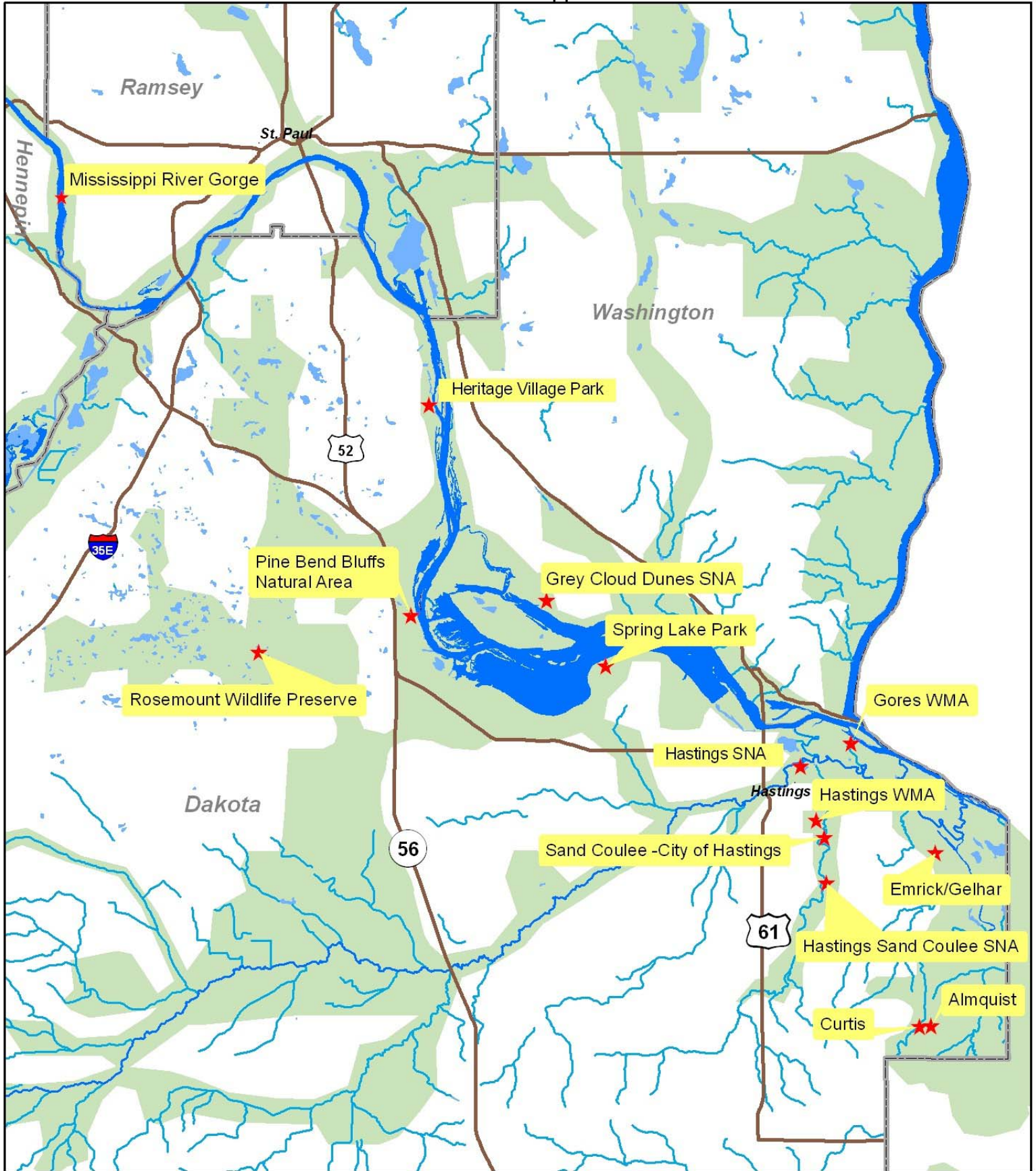
<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel:	\$ -
Conservation Director: Overall project management, assist with evaluation of restoration, and landowner outreach and assistance. .06 FTE. 84% salary, 16% benefits.	\$ 8,700
Ecologist/Program Manager: Develop and put out bids, hire and oversee vendors, guide restoration activities, evaluate restoration activities. .16 FTE. 83% Salary, 17% Benefits.	\$ 19,700
Stewardship Coordinator: Plan volunteer events. Train and oversee volunteers. .02FTE. 78% Salary, 22% Benefits.	\$ 1,670
Volunteer Coordinator: Seek, register, & communicate with volunteers. .02FTE. 80% Salary, 20% Benefits.	\$ 1,340
Contracts: Professional/technical. Vendors to provide restoration activities such as prescribed burns, soil prep., seeding, woody and exotic plant removal, herbicide application, etc. (Vendor contracts will be awarded on a competitive and performance basis.)	\$ 197,250
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Gloves, weeders, vinyl seed collection bags	\$ 240
Plant material: Pay for a nursery to germinate and grow plants from locally collected seed. Purchase trees and shrubs.	\$ 2,400
Travel: mileage for traveling to project sites and to partner meetings	\$ 1,300
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 232,600

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Private landowners \$110,000 (project matching funds), Mississippi River Gorge partners \$20,000 (project matching funds), FMR \$5,000.	\$ 135,000	<i>Secured</i>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period. These are funds that have been applied for or sought but there is less certainty about them: FMR - \$40,000, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation & the National Park Service \$40,000, City of Inver Grove Heights \$10,000 (project matching funds), \$10,000 Private Landowners(project matching funds). Dakota County.	\$ 100,000	<i>Pending</i>
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:	\$ -	
In-kind Services During Project Period:	\$ -	
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): All of MeCC Phase IV- 2008 appropriation is legally allocated. MeCC-Phase V- 2009 appropriation is not legally allocated but has been designated to specific projects.	\$ 90,000	<i>Not legally allocated, but all has been designated to specific projects.</i>
Funding History: Amount of ENRTF FMR has received for habitat restoration through Metro Wildlife Corridors 2003 appropriation - \$92,000, 2005 appropriation - \$90,000, 2007 appropriation - \$53,000, 2008 appropriation \$92,000, 2009 appropriation \$90,000.	\$ 417,000	

2011-2012 LCCMR MAIN PROPOSAL
PROJECT TITLE: MeCC6-2.3
Restore and Enhance Significant Watershed Habitat

Friends of the Mississippi River.



PROJECT TITLE: MeCC6–2.3 Restore and Enhance Significant Watershed Habitat

Project Manager Qualifications:

Tom Lewanski, Conservation Director

Tom holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Outdoor Education, and Masters & Doctorate degrees in Public Administration. Tom has over 27 years of experience working in the environmental/conservation field. Since 1998 he has served as FMR's Conservation Director. In that capacity Tom has led the organization's efforts to protect and restore land along the Mississippi River, resulting in the establishment of two new Scientific and Natural Areas in Dakota County and the protection and restoration of hundreds of acres of natural areas. A skilled naturalist, he taught environmental education at the Carpenter Nature Center for ten years. Tom is the lead staff person responsible for FMR's land conservation work.

Organization Description:

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) is a leading citizen organization working to protect and enhance the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities area. We believe the tremendous ecological, cultural, scenic and recreational values of the river must be carefully tended to ensure that they continue to be shared equally by all citizens and that they endure for future generations. We accomplish these goals through three inter-related programs.

- Land Conservation: We work with public and private landowners to protect, restore and manage important natural areas along the river and its key tributaries.
- Watershed Protection: Working with citizens and local governments, we strive to draw attention to the health of local rivers, lakes and wetlands and bring citizen opinion to bear on decisions that improve water quality.
- River Corridor Stewardship: The Mississippi River cannot protect itself. We engage citizens in a variety of educational, recreational, and volunteer stewardship activities that give them the desire and the understanding to advocate on behalf of the river's public values at City Hall or the State Capitol.