

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

LCCMR ID: 104-D-3.2

Project Title: 3.2 - MeCC 6 - Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements

Category: D. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Total Project Budget: \$ \$900,000

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 0

Summary:

To protect 300 acres of critical habitat in the greater metropolitan area by securing permanent conservation easements and dedicating funds for the perpetual monitoring, management, and enforcement of those easements.

Name: Sarah Strommen

Sponsoring Organization: Minnesota Land Trust

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

Telephone Number: 651-647-9590

Email: sstrommen@mnland.org

Web Address: www.mnland.org

Location

Region: Metro

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

County Name: Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Goodhue, Hennepin, Isanti, Le Sueur, Nicollet, Ramsey, Rice, Scott, Sherburne, Sibley, Washington, Wright

City / Township:

_____ 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: MeCC 6–3.2 Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The Minnesota Land Trust has worked extensively in the greater Twin Cities area since 1992 to permanently protect natural and scenic lands with an emphasis on using conservation easements. This strategy has been acknowledged by a variety of stakeholders, and in the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, as one of the key tools necessary to achieve land conservation goals in a metropolitan area where escalating land values prohibit fee title acquisition of many priority lands.

Our goal is to permanently protect priority lands that contribute to a regional connected network of critical habitat within the greater Twin Cities area and help maintain water quality of some of the region's most important rivers, lakes, and streams. To this end, the Land Trust will identify tracts of land within the mapped project areas critical to the protection of habitat and shoreland. In particular, we will focus on evaluating protection needs and opportunities on three of the region's Wild and Scenic Rivers – the St. Croix, the Rum, and the Cannon.

The Land Trust works only with perpetual conservation easements. These easements prohibit land uses or development that negatively affect important habitat and other conservation values, require habitat management plans as appropriate, and direct the use of native vegetation in conjunction with any required restoration. These easements are monitored annually and enforced as necessary under the Land Trust's comprehensive conservation easement stewardship program funded in part through our Stewardship and Enforcement Fund. Grant funds may also be requested for our dedicated Stewardship and Enforcement Fund on a project-by-project basis in accordance with our LCCMR-approved policies and procedures. The Land Trust will report to LCCMR annually on the status of the Stewardship and Enforcement Fund and the easements acquired with funds from this grant.

Proposed activities under this grant include: 1) evaluating the current state of land protection along three State Wild and Scenic Rivers and identifying gaps and opportunities for additional protection; 2) contacting and negotiating with interested landowners along these rivers and in other strategic locations; 3) drafting and completing conservation easements; 4) documenting property conditions; and 5) dedicating funds for the perpetual monitoring, management and enforcement of those easements.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Analysis of Existing Protection Status along Wild and Scenic Rivers & Identification of Future Opportunities **Budget: \$75,000**

The Land Trust will work with the DNR, National Park Service and others to identify future opportunities and priorities. This analysis will complement and provide additional detail to the evaluation currently being conducted by the larger MeCC Partnership and will: 1) evaluate data on existing protected lands; 2) assemble other appropriate natural resource data along the rivers, such as county biological survey information, as well as ownership data; and 3) identify

gaps in protection and highlight future opportunities or priorities for protection. This work will involve strategic conservation planning to identify, prioritize, and pursue those specific tracts of land that will most effectively and efficiently achieve the region's habitat and conservation goals.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Analysis with maps of potential protection priorities	June 30, 2012

Activity 2: Protect Significant Habitat through Conservation Easements Budget: \$825,000

The Land Trust will protect critical habitat within the mapped corridors with an emphasis on Wild and Scenic River protection by: 1) contacting landowners identified under Activity 1 and other interested landowners; 2) negotiating and completing 5-7 permanent conservation easements on 300 acres of land; and 3) dedicating funds for the perpetual monitoring, management and enforcement of the easements. The Land Trust will work primarily with donated easements, purchasing easements when necessary and then at below market value whenever possible. Current potential projects are identified on the attached list. New projects will be added as landowners are identified through the process described in Activity 1. We will continually evaluate potential projects and pursue those that protect the highest quality habitat and maximize public benefit.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Protect 300 acres by completing 5-7 conservation easements with emphasis along Cannon, Rum and St. Croix Rivers.	June 30, 2013

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

The Land Trust is the only entity receiving funds through this request, however, the Land Trust coordinates its work with other Metro Conservation Corridors partners (please see overall proposal for list of project partners) as appropriate. Additionally, our partners include private landowners, as well as various units of state and local government that help in identifying and completing potential projects.

B. Timeline Requirements

We anticipate completing the analysis by June 20, 2012 and the 5-7 conservation easements by June 30, 2013.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

This project is part of the Land Trust's long-term, strategic conservation agenda. The conservation agenda sets out the specific conservation focus of the Minnesota Land Trust. This focus includes natural habitats for wildlife, fish and plants, lakeshores, rivers and streams, and scenic landscapes accessible or visible to the public. The conservation agenda also identifies a suite of critical landscapes throughout the State that embody the natural and cultural features that make Minnesota unique. The Metropolitan Conservation Corridors is one of the Land Trust's identified critical landscapes – one that addresses the unique conservation challenges that exist in a largely developed area.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

MeCC6-3.2: Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements

IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel: Staff expenses including salaries, benefits (FICA, FUTA, SUI, worker's comp health insurance, 401 (k), etc.) and related costs for approximately 1.5 FTE for 2 years as follows: Conservation directors or other land protection staff (approximately 1 FTE) and Staff attorney and other support staff (approximately .5 FTE).	\$ 210,000
Contracts: GIS analysis and planning assistance (Community GIS or other contractor selected on competitive basis)	\$ 10,000
Acquisition (Permanent Easements): Includes purchase price of conservation easement(s); title work, insurance, etc.; maps, GIS (including project mapping by Community GIS); film; other (including appraisals, surveys, recording fees, etc.) to protect up to 300 acres of land.	\$ 570,000
Travel: Mileage and related travel expenses in Minnesota. Estimated at 9,000 miles at \$0.50 per mile and \$500 for meals.	\$ 5,000
Conservation Easement Stewardship: Funds dedicated to perpetually monitoring, managing, and enforcing 5-7 easements acquired and held by the Land Trust as needed. Estimated at \$15,000 per easement.	\$ 105,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 900,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: \$1,000,000 - These other funds represent an estimate of the potential value of easements donated to the Land Trust under this project. The value of donated easements is difficult to predict, but we believe we can achieve at least one million dollars in leverage.	\$ 1,000,000	Pending, dependent upon actual projects completed
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Unknown at this time.	Unknown	
In-kind Services During Project Period: While the Land Trust does not itemize the specific value of in-kind services, substantial amounts of unreimbursable staff time and overhead are required to complete land protection projects with ENRTF funding.	Unknown	
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation: Metro Corridors 2008: No funds remaining - grant completed. Metro Corridors 2009: \$245,700. <i>Metro Corridors 2010 Recommended: \$485,000</i>	\$ 730,700	Spent or committed by July 2010 (2009 funds)
Funding History: Metro Corridors 2005: \$230,000; 2007: \$134,000; 2008: \$225,000; 2009: \$250,000. These values represent past Trust Fund appropriations to prior phases of this project. They do not include donated value of easements or funds from other sources spent on projects completed or expected to be completed under these grants. Outdoor Heritage Fund 2009: Bluffland Prairie Protection (partial overlapping geography): \$500,000; <i>Outdoor Heritage Fund 2010 Recommended: Valley Creek \$838,000</i>	\$ 839,000	Total includes MeCC funding only

2011-2012 Acquisition List for Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Proposal

Project Title: MeCC6-3.2: Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements

Project Manager Name: Sarah Strommen

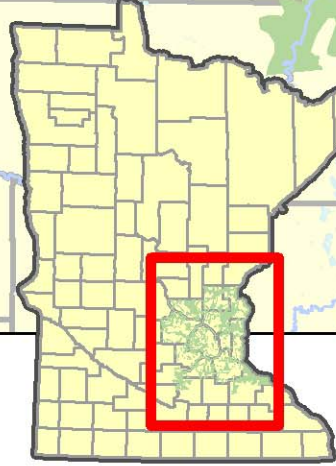
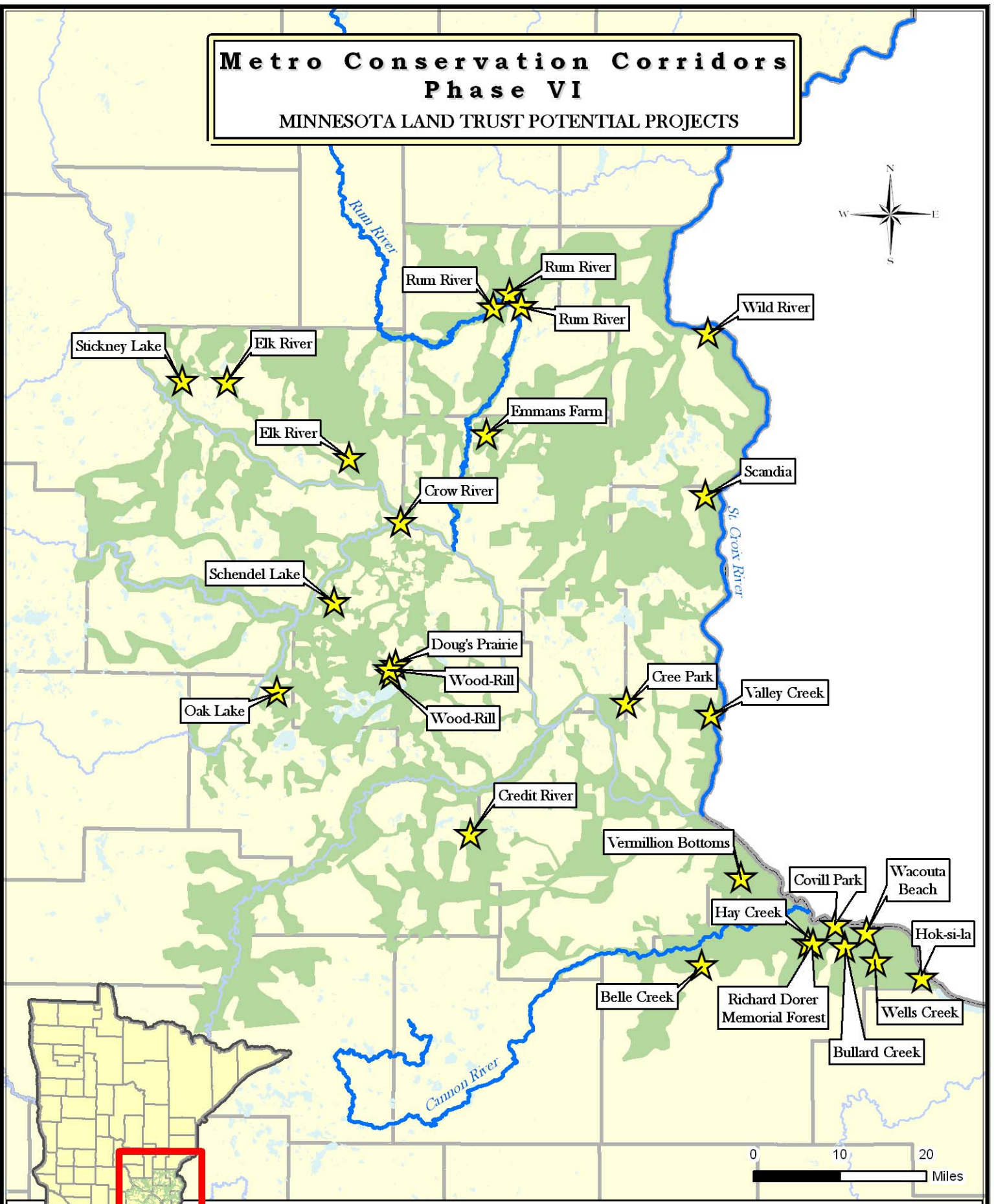
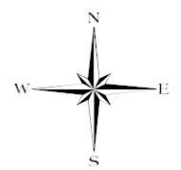
Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund \$ Request: \$900,000

Final Easement Holder(s): Minnesota Land Trust

#	Parcel Name	Acquisition Type (Fee-Title OR Conservation Easement)	County	Estimated # of Acres	Geographical Coordinates (Provide Latitude/Longitude OR UTM-X/UTM-Y)			
					Latitude	Longitude	UTM-X	UTM-Y
1	Emmans Farm	Conservation Easement	Anoka	80			475419	5025598
2	Rum River	Conservation Easement	Isanti	36			476605	5049201
3	Rum River	Conservation Easement	Isanti	65			481789	5049392
4	Rum River	Conservation Easement	Isanti	40			479612	5051732
5	Elk River	Conservation Easement	Sherburne	128			427213	5035394
6	Elk River	Conservation Easement	Sherburne	150			449778	5021260
7	Stickney Lake	Conservation Easement	Sherburne	600			418835	5035544
8	Crow River	Conservation Easement	Hennepin	28			459445	5009388
9	Schendel Lake	Conservation Easement	Hennepin	TBD			447080	4994399
10	Wood-Rill	Conservation Easement	Hennepin	20			457290	4981950
11	Wood-Rill	Conservation Easement	Hennepin	1			457641	4981055
12	Doug's Prairie	Conservation Easement	Hennepin	92			458449	4982772
13	Cree Park	Conservation Easement	Washington	10			501414	4975686
14	Valley Creek	Conservation Easement	Washington	TBD			517082	4973532
15	Scandia	Conservation Easement	Washington	5			515993	5014336
16	Wild River	Conservation Easement	Chisago	10			516538	5044459
17	Oak Lake	Conservation Easement	Carver	106			436427	4977756
18	Credit River	Conservation Easement	Scott	22			472326	4951410
19	Belle Creek	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	80			515393	4926932
20	Bullard Creek	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	60			541896	4930355
21	Covill Park	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	5			540214	4934519
22	Hay Creek	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	140			535096	4931044
23	Hok-si-la	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	10			556276	4924651
24	Richard Dorer Memorial Forest	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	111			536021	4930848
25	Vermillion Bottoms	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	500			522675	4943287
26	Wacouta Beach	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	16			545940	4933111
27	Wells Creek	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	57			547650	4927714

NOTES: This is a list of projects the Minnesota Land Trust currently is considering. Other projects may be added to the list as new landowners are identified and contacted. Some projects on this list will not be completed, while other projects may be completed under prior phases of this program.

**Metro Conservation Corridors
Phase VI**
MINNESOTA LAND TRUST POTENTIAL PROJECTS



- Metro Conservation Corridors
- Minnesota Land Trust Potential Projects





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.

With a conservation focus on protecting Minnesota's natural and scenic lands—particularly its renowned lakes, rivers and streams—the Land Trust has completed 398 land protection projects, permanently protecting more than 35,000 acres and more than 700,000 feet of shoreline and aquatic resources.

Project Manager 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.

Sarah Strommen serves as the Conservation Director for the Land Trust's central region. Sarah joined the Land Trust staff in October 2005 and is responsible for developing and implementing the Land Trust's programs in the eleven-county greater metropolitan area and the counties to the west and north. Prior to joining the Land Trust, Sarah served as the Policy Director for the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness. She also recently served on the State's Clean Water Council and on the City Council for the City of Ramsey, where her duties included being the Council's liaison to the City's Environmental Policy Board and the Lower Rum River WMO. Sarah has a bachelor's degree in Biology from Grinnell College and a master's degree in Environmental Management from Duke University. She also was a Fulbright Scholar in Costa Rica, where she investigated sustainable development and bird conservation.

Other Project Staff

Nancy Kafka joined the Minnesota Land Trust staff in May 2008. As the Conservation Director for the southern region, she is responsible for overseeing the Land Trust's conservation activities in the Mississippi Blufflands and surrounding areas in southeastern Minnesota as well as in other areas throughout southern Minnesota. Nancy returned to Minnesota after nearly 30 years living and working in New England, most recently as the senior program director in the Parks for People program at the Trust for Public Land's Boston office. Nancy graduated from the University of Minnesota with a bachelor's degree in Housing.

