

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

LCCMR ID: 106-D-3c

Project Title: 3c - HCP 7 - Shallow Lake Conservation Easements

Category: D. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Total Project Budget: \$ \$1,650,000

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 0

Summary:

Ducks Unlimited will secure purchased and donated permanent conservation easements on 440 acres along key shallow lakes for waterfowl, provide for annual monitoring and stewardship, and restore 200 acres where possible.

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Sponsoring Organization: Ducks Unlimited

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Alexandria MN 56308

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Location

Region: Statewide

Ecological Section: Statewide

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 <input type="checkbox"/> %

2011-2012 MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: HCP7-3c Shallow Lake Conservation Easements

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Shallow lakes represent the core of Minnesota's remaining waterfowl habitat. Shallow lakes are defined by the Minnesota DNR as basins 50 acres or larger in size that are 15 feet deep or less, on average. These are large wetlands that were not easily drained and farmed, but which now receive drainage from converted landscapes and which are subject to development since they are large bodies of water and often called "lakes". DNR estimates Minnesota has lost 90% of our prairie wetlands and 99% of our native prairie grassland, and many shallow lakes are located in this highly-altered and degraded landscape. To improve them, Minnesota DNR's Section of Wildlife has legally designated 45 shallow lakes for active wildlife management, and Ducks Unlimited (DU) assists those efforts. To protect these remaining large wetlands and limit further degradation, DU helps promote the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) in their watersheds. However, many shoreland properties do not qualify or rank high for the WRP.

Therefore, to protect their shoreland and limit future subdivision and development, DU also offers to purchase or accept donated permanent conservation easements from the private landowners on key shallow lakes, especially those designated by Minnesota DNR for wildlife management purposes such as Lake Christina. This addresses the goal of protecting lands adjacent to aquatic habitats such as shallow lakes as outlined in LCCMR's "Six-Year Strategic Plan for the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund". Appendix A of the Plan contains the "Statewide Conservation & Preservation Plan" and two recommendations directly relevant to shallow lakes and this proposal. Habitat recommendation #1 "Protect Critical Shoreland of Streams and Lakes" mentions the need to protect and restore shallow lake shoreland with conservation easements. Habitat recommendation #4 "Restore and Protect Shallow Lakes" specifically lists funding as being "needed to purchase conservation easements around shallow lakes to restore their lakesheds (small wetlands and grass buffers) and prevent development."

DU permanent conservation easements on shallow lakes will protect sensitive shoreland and shorelines by limiting development. DU easements will restore shoreland habitat when possible and necessary, which will directly provide and protect habitat for species using shallow lakes, and will indirectly improve water quality of shallow lakes and DNR in-basin management efforts.

To achieve these goals, DU biologists will work with shallow lake private landowners to educate them about conservation easements, and DU will secure donated or purchased permanent conservation easements from willing landowners on 440 acres along or near key shallow lakes, especially those managed by the Minnesota DNR. Of these, DU will attempt to restore 200 acres of uplands and small drained wetlands, as needed based on the condition of lands protected with easements. Detailed restoration plans will be developed in the process.

Grant funds needed for future annual easement monitoring and stewardship will be calculated for each easement using the DU easement endowment worksheet table, which captures all anticipated expenditures for easement monitoring and stewardship. All necessary additional assurances related to the management and use of grant funds for stewardship by DU and its affiliate Wetlands America Trust (WAT) that holds title to the actual easements and manages stewardship funding will be provided in a detailed work program, if state funding is recommended for this proposal. Overall, DU is requesting a total of \$1,650,000 in this proposal.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Conservation Easement Outreach, Promotion, & Securement Budget: \$1,385,000

DU biologists will work with private landowners on shallow lakes to inform and educate them about permanent conservation easements to gain their interest and trust in beginning land protection negotiations. Successful outreach work will culminate with the appraisal and negotiation of permanent conservation easements on 440 acres on or near shallow lakes.

Outcome	Completion Date
Secure permanent conservation easements on 440 acres on shallow lakes	June 30, 2013

Activity 2: Help Landowners Restore Lands Protected, if/where Needed Budget: \$ 100,000

DU biologists will help private conservation easement landowners restored converted uplands and wetlands back to wildlife habitat through native plantings and wetland restoration in cases where easement lands contain cultivated or converted areas. This work will primarily involve the seeding of local ecotype native grasses and forbs, and small wetland restorations. Some areas may be restored through the USDA's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), or by consultants hired by DU with DU biologist oversight. Restoration plans will be developed.

Outcome	Completion Date
Restore up to 200 acres of uplands & wetlands as needed on easements	June 30, 2013

Activity 3: Conservation Easement Stewardship & Annual Monitoring Budget: \$125,000

DU will calculate future conservation easement stewardship and annual monitoring costs and endow those expenses to ensure all easements protected through this grant are monitored annually in perpetuity and conservation easement terms are enforced.

Outcome	Completion Date
Provide for Stewardship & Annual Monitoring of Conservation Easements	June 30, 2013

Activity 4: Grant Administration and Coordination of Grant Activities Budget: \$40,000

DU biologists will work with private landowners on shallow lakes to inform and educate them about permanent conservation easements to gain their interest and trust in beginning land protection negotiations. Successful outreach work will culminate with the appraisal and negotiation of permanent conservation easements on 440 acres on or near shallow lakes.

Outcome	Completion Date
Administer grant, coordinate field activities, and provide reports to LCCMR.	June 30, 2013

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

DU works closely with Minnesota DNR on shallow lake projects, but directly with private landowners regarding conservation easements. DU holds and enforces the terms of these easements, and annually monitors their condition and stewards their private landowners.

B. Timeline Requirements

This project will take a full two years to complete, given the sensitive nature of private land protection negotiations that involve appraisals, abstract and title updates, financial transactions, and recording. Restorations will be done in conjunction or after easements are closed.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

DU has been securing permanent conservation easements in Minnesota since 2004, and now holds 15 permanent conservation easements around the state. DU (WAT) have endowed the stewardship and annual monitoring for each of these. This project is a continuation of the effort to permanently protect all private land adjacent to key shallow lakes managed for waterfowl.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

Ducks Unlimited
Shallow Lake Conservation Easements
HCP Phase 7, Part 3C

IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET (2 years)

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Personnel: DU land protection biologist to conduct landowner outreach and negotiate conservation easements with private landowners. 0.8 FTE/year over 2 years, 60% salary 40% benefits.	\$ 130,000
Personnel: DU conservation program manager to administer this grant and coordinate grant activities. 0.2 FTE/year over 2 years, 60% salary 40% benefits.	\$ 40,000
Contracts: Appraisals and other professional services such as consulted baseline documentation reports for new easements. Estimated at \$10,000 per easement.	\$ 50,000
Contracts: Restoration contracts with private vendors to seed cropland to native plants and restore small wetlands, etc. Estimated at \$500/acre on 200 acres.	\$ 100,000
Acquisition (Permanent Easements): An estimated 400 acres will be protected via purchased permanent conservation easement at an estimated \$3,000/acre. DU and it's affiliate, Wetlands America Trust (WAT), will hold, monitor, and enforce the easements while the fee-title will remain in private ownership.	\$ 1,200,000
Travel: In-state travel to visit landowners and negotiate conservation easements on selected shallow lakes managed by the Minnesota DNR throughout the state.	\$ 5,000
Stewardship for Permanent Conservation Easements: Stewardship for long-term conservation easements monitoring and management, estimated at \$25,000/easement for 5 easements.	\$ 125,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 1,650,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Private land value donation as part of bargain sale or donated conservation easements.	\$ 100,000	Pending
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:	\$ -	N/A
In-kind Services During Project Period: In-kind DU personnel expense associated with spending these grant funds.	\$ 60,000	Pending
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): DU is currently working with landowners to obligate \$250,000 of 2009 ENRTF grant funds and \$75,000 from our 2010 ENRTF supplemental grant. Several land deals are pending, and funds should be obligated by the end of 2010 and will be by July 2011 when this grant would become available, if recommended and approved.	\$ 325,000	Not Yet Legally Obligated
Funding History: DU has received and spent \$600,000 in ENRTF grants for conservation easements totaling since 2005, not including our 2009 grant and 2010 recommendation that have yet to be spent. DU also received and spent \$128,000 in other state DNR funds on conservation easements in the past. DU plans to use \$300,000 of our 2009 Outdoor Heritage Fund grant on conservation easements. Finally, DU has also received several federal NAWCA grants totaling \$512,000 in Minnesota since 2005 for conservation easements.	\$ 1,540,000	Spent or Legally Obligated

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

Project Title: HCP7-3C Shallow Lake Conservation Easements

Project Manager Name: Jon Schneider, Ducks Unlimited

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund \$ Request: \$1,650,000

Final Title Holder(s): Wetlands America Trust, Inc., a supporting organization (affiliate) of Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

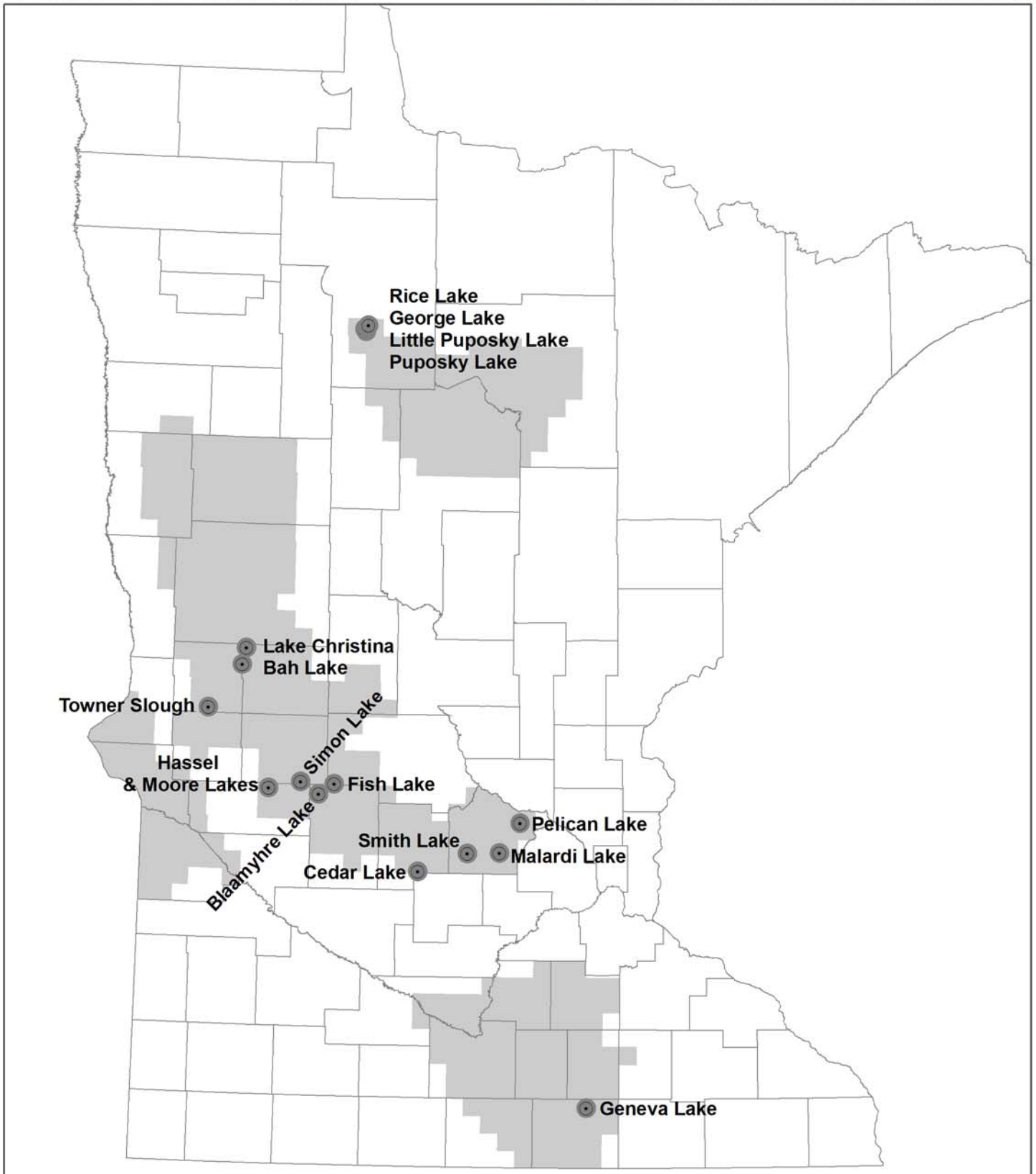
#	Parcel Name	Acquisition Type (Fee-Title OR Conservation Easement)	County	Estimated # of Acres	Geographical Coordinates (Provide Latitude/Longitude OR UTM-X/UTM-Y)			
					Latitude	Longitude	UTM-X	UTM-Y
1	Rice Lake	Easement	Beltrami	n/a	47.7260	94.9150	356368	5287699
2	George Lake	Easement	Beltrami	n/a	47.7180	94.9300	355422	5286823
3	Little Puposky Lake	Easement	Beltrami	n/a	47.7090	94.9420	354362	5285809
4	Puposky Lake	Easement	Beltrami	n/a	47.6950	94.9340	355100	5284322
5	Lake Christina	Easement	Douglas	n/a	46.0940	95.7420	297928	5107756
6	Bah Lake	Easement	Douglas	n/a	46.0030	95.7650	285811	5098655
7	Towner Slough	Easement	Grant	n/a	45.7650	96.0800	261188	5072571
8	Hassel Lake	Easement	Swift	n/a	45.3910	95.5640	299212	5029539
9	Moore Lake	Easement	Swift	n/a	45.3820	85.5410	301089	5028540
10	Simon Lake	Easement	Pope	n/a	45.4200	95.3250	318203	5032416

NOTES: DU is working with landowners on each of these lakes, but conservation easement details to be closed in 2011-12 are not known at this time.

2010 LCCMR Habitat Conservation Partnership Phase 7 Grant



Project Lake Locations for Potential DU Conservation Easements



● Ducks Unlimited Project Lake Location

■ LCCMR HCP Phase 7 Project Areas

As Conservation Program Manager for Ducks Unlimited in Minnesota since 1999, Jon Schneider is responsible for all public grant management, partner coordination, and conservation program implementation to support Ducks Unlimited's Living Lakes Initiative. This involves significant project and program level coordination with agency partners and field staff, DU field biologists and engineers, DU land protection staff, and both DU support staff and administrators. Jon has been responsible for the development and management of DU's Minnesota conservation budgets totaling over \$2 million annually, and has administered four LCCMR grants, six North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant, and multiple smaller DNR grants for individual projects since 1999. Jon is a Certified Wildlife Biologist (The Wildlife Society) and Professional Wetlands Scientist (Society of Wetland Scientists), and holds a B.S. degree in Business Administration & Biology from the State University of New York College at Oswego and an M.S. degree in Range & Wildlife Management from Texas A&M University.

The mission of Ducks Unlimited is to conserve, restore, and manage wetlands and associated habitats for North American's waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people. The continental vision of Ducks Unlimited is wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow, and forever. In Minnesota and Iowa, Ducks Unlimited is strategically focused on the conservation of shallow lakes through our "Living Lakes" conservation initiative. The vision of DU's Living Lakes Initiative is to establish stepping stones of perpetually protected and managed shallow lake complexes from southern Iowa through northern Minnesota to provide high quality wetland food and habitat resources for waterfowl. The initiative will help preserve this region's rich waterfowling heritage and support conservation of the primary source of its birds, the prairie breeding grounds. Since its founding in 1937, DU has raised more than \$1.6 billion, which has contributed to the conservation of more than 11 million acres of prime wildlife habitat in all 50 states, each of the Canadian provinces, and in key areas of Mexico. In the U.S. Alone, DU has helped to conserve more than 2 million acres of waterfowl habitat. Some 900 species of wildlife live and flourish on DU projects, including many threatened or endangered species. DU conservation staff based in Minnesota work from home offices, and are supported by the Great Plains Regional Office staff in Bismarck, ND, and by DU National Office staff in Memphis, TN.

