

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

LCCMR ID: 116-D

Project Title: Minnesota River Valley Green Corridor Project Phase II

Category: D. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Total Project Budget: \$ \$2,699,620

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 0

Summary:

Protect the most ecologically sensitive available lands identified by MCBS, DNR Ecological Resources, and Green Corridor Conservation Plan from destruction/degradation/fragmentation in cooperation with the Minnesota DNR.

Name: Brad Cobb

Sponsoring Organization: Green Corridor Inc.

Address: 103 2nd Street
Redwood Falls MN 56283

Telephone Number: 320-493-4695

Email: 1231tlc@charter.net

Web Address: _____

Location

Region: SW

Ecological Section: North Central Glaciated Plains (251B)

County Name: Brown, Chippewa, Nicollet, Redwood, Renville, Yellow Medicine

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: Minnesota River Valley – Green Corridor Project Phase II

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

This project is a continuation of our FY08 LCCMR activities with a renewed emphasis on protecting the most ecologically sensitive areas or regions of the mid-section of the Minnesota River Valley through fee title acquisitions that could become degraded, fragmented, or even destroyed by further residential, agricultural, or mining developments. The primary goal of this project is to protect through fee title acquisition approximately 650 acres of the most critically sensitive habitat lands and transfer ownership to the appropriate MN DNR Division. These properties would be acquired from willing/supportive sellers within targeted areas of the MN River Valley. In cooperation with the MN DNR Division of Ecological Resources, Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) Program and the use of the LCCMR funded Minnesota River Valley Green Corridor Conservation plan we have identified four (4) key areas/regions with remnant native prairie, rare rock outcrop communities, and/or other critical or sensitive natural habitats that have been recommended by the Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS) as high priorities for protection in which we will concentrate our efforts. We will evaluate and secure agreements with willing/supportive landowners who own properties within these four (4) target areas and then prioritize them for protection through fee title agreements or for DNR held Native Prairie Bank (NPB) conservation easements. In most cases properties acquired in fee would then be transferred to the MN DNR Division of Ecological Resources for designation and management as Scientific and Natural Areas. For native prairie sites where the landowners are only interested in a conservation easement, we will facilitate their acquisition by the DNR as NPB conservation easements. The DNR - SNA program is willing to work with us and other partners to identify opportunities to interpret SNA's and encourage "light on the land" use in conjunction with Natural or Ecological Interpretive Trails proposed in the Minnesota River Valley.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Evaluate & Complete Property Considerations

Budget: \$39,600

Within the four (4) target areas then contracted Program Manager will perform this activity by coordinating and reviewing various conservation plans, DNR priority acquisition lists, and then working with landowners who own land of the most ecological importance for protection as proposed by MCBS/Green Corridor Conservation Plan and then contact those landowners (through letters, direct contacts or visits) to discuss their willingness to participate in this project. Program Manager has demonstrated skill sets to successfully perform this activity. We anticipate 20-25 landowner contacts of which we would anticipate 6-8 purchase agreements from landowners with the most critical habitats in need of protection. All proposed project acquisitions will require DNR approval. This activity is labor intensive and requires 13-14 hours for each original parcel coordination and contact – 330 hours total. Securing the anticipated 6-8 for fee acquisition includes the fulfillment of LCCMR Exhibit F requirements, final negotiations, DNR acceptance process, coordinating appraisals, title opinions, purchase agreements, boundary surveys, and closing activities (for NPS conservation easements would include the DNR in negotiating easement terms and conditions and if needed completing boundary surveys) would require an additional 330 hours per agreement. Total time = 660 hrs @ \$60/hr.

Outcome – Activity #1	Completion Date
Step 1= 20-25 Initial parcel reviews and landowner contacts	December 2011

Step 2= 6-8 DNR Review, Appraisals, and signed Purchase Agreements	December 2012
Step 3= 6-8 Boundary Surveys, title reviews, closings, and title transfers	June 2013

Activity 2: Fee Title Acquisition of 650 acres

Budget: \$2,600,000

650 acres will be protected by fee title acquisition at a projected cost of \$4,000 per acre. These acquired properties would be deeded to the appropriate division of the DNR who will be responsible for all future management activities. The DNR SNA program has stated they will be responsible for and use separate appropriations directly to the DNR to cover DNR's real estate transaction costs, to prepare a management plan, and assure that sites acquired meet the Commissioner's minimum standards. Further restoration and/or enhancement standards (if needed) would be identified in the management plan. Professional services (title opinions, legal review and closing documents, appraisals, and if needed boundary surveys) incurred by Green Corridor Inc. is budgeted at \$6,000 per project. This activity includes the fulfillment of LCCMR Exhibit F requirements to include County Board notifications.

Outcome – Activity #2	Completion Date
Protect in fee title 650 acres and transfer to DNR/state	June 2013

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Redwood Area Communities Foundation (RACF) dba Green Corridor Inc. – Fiscal oversight, auditing, and fund appropriations.

Brad Cobb – Contracted Project Manager Green Corridor Inc. Responsible for Activities 1 & 2

Minnesota DNR, Scientific and Natural Area Program – Technical or advisory partner

Tatanka Bluffs Corridor Inc – Advocacy partner

Minnesota River Watershed Alliance – Advocacy partner

Redwood Area Development Corporation – Technical and Advocacy partner

Redwood Area Chamber & Tourism – Advocacy partner

B. Timeline Requirements

Outcomes as listed in the Activity Section to be accomplished by June 30, 2013.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

The Minnesota River Valley Green Corridor Phase II program is a continuation of the FY08 LCCMR grant which established the framework for future activities. Phase II emphasis will be to protect the most critically sensitive and/or ecologically significant natural resource eco systems as recommended by the Minnesota County Biological Survey. The long range strategy is to work in partnership with the DNR and using the FY08 LCCMR funded Green Corridor Conservation Plan in guiding and directing all future activities in concert with our regional and state-wide partnerships.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET - Two (2) years

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Personnel: Redwood Area Communities Foundation dba Green Corridor Inc. Fiscal Oversight 13% FTE 100% Salary & 0% Benefits, 07/01/2011 - 06/30/2013 total budget for this position = \$10,000	\$10,000
Contracts: Brad Cobb - Green Corridor Inc Project Manager Contracted. Responsible for Activities 1 & 2. 25%. 660 hrs @ \$60/hr. 16% FTE - 80% salary % 20% Benefits 07/01/2011 - 06/30/2013	\$39,600
Acquisition - Fee Title: 650 acres estimated at \$4000/acre of fee title acquisitions transferred title to the MN DNR	\$2,600,000
Travel: All travel is associated to accomplishing Activities 1 & 2. Total estimated mileage 4,000 miles @ \$.505/mile	\$2,020
Additional Budget Items: Professional services; appraisers, survey, legal/title and purchase agreement reviews. Estimated 8 projects @ \$6,000 each.	\$48,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 2,699,620

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: If funded will attempt to receive matching funds from other organizations and/or negotiating bargain sales with willing landowners.	\$20,000	Pending
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: N/A	\$0	
In-kind Services During Project Period: Approx. 200 hours of In Kind services for assistance from skilled members of the Green Corridor Board of Directors helping to identify and contacting landowners in the 4 key focus areas. 200 hrs @ \$30/hr	\$6,000	
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): FY2008 Minnesota River Valley Green Corridor Project. The only remaining budget left from this appropriation is approx. \$11,000 payable to Great River Greening at the completion of the ENRTF funded Green Corridor Conservation Plan	\$11,000	Payable when Plan is final
Funding History: FY08 ENRTF - \$1,000,000, FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) \$1,617,000, and FY11 OHF (pending) \$1,651,000	\$4,269,000	In process

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

Project Title: Minnesota River Valley Green Corridor Phase II

Project Manager Name: Brad Cobb

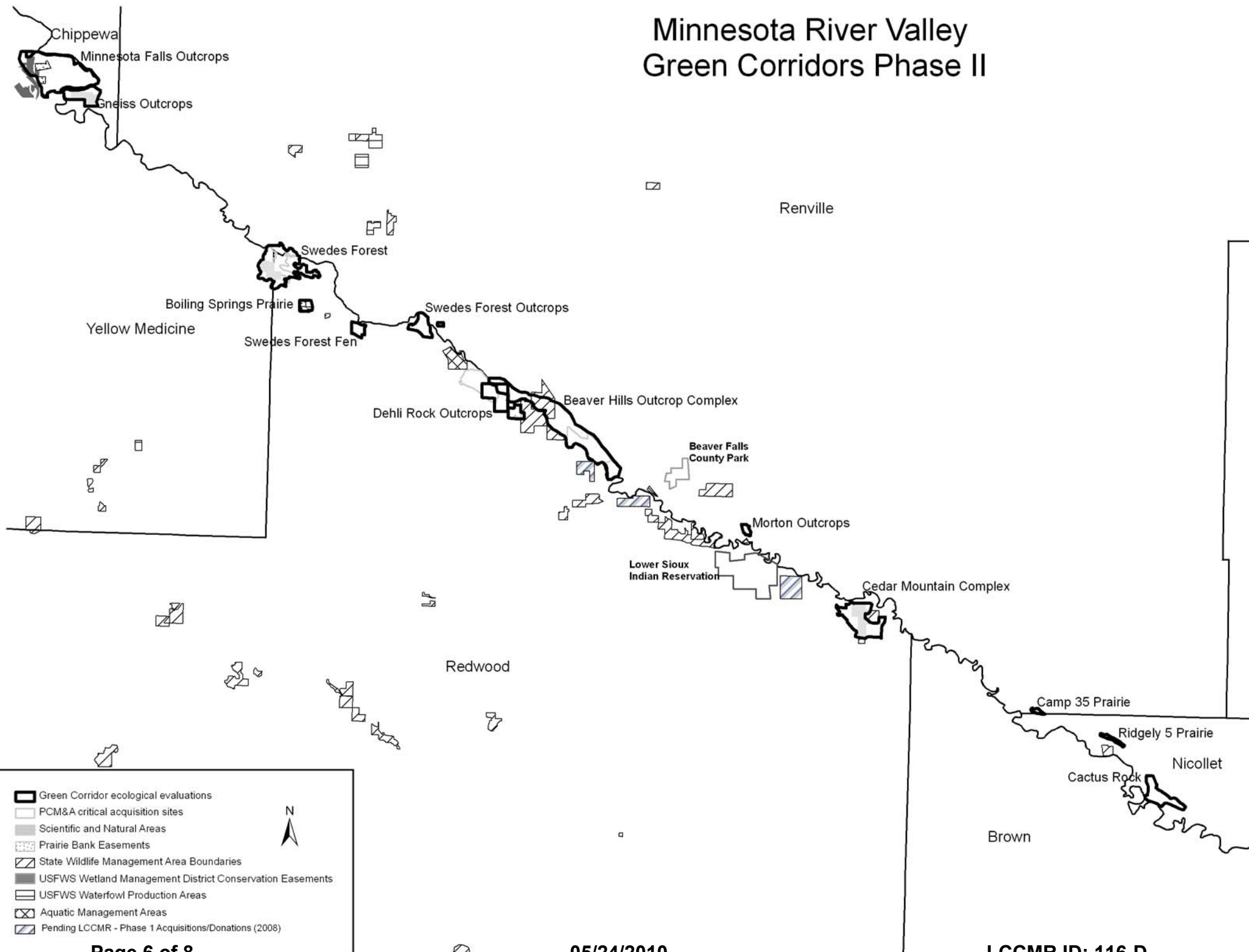
Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund \$ Request: \$2,699,620

Final Title Holder(s): MN DNR

#	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	Cactus Rock	Fee Title	Nicollet	160			366405	4919341
2	Delhi Rock Outcrops	Fee Title	Redwood	170			327710	4942385
3	Morton Outcrops	Fee Title	Renville	35			341647	4935327
4	Beaver Falls Outcrop Complex	Fee Title	Renville	1,200			330275	4943200
5	Ceder Mountain Complex	Fee Title	Redwood	520			348519	4929871
6	Swedes Forest	Fee Title	Redwood	600			313038	4950974
7	Swedes Forest Outcorps	Fee Title	Redwood	200			322106	4947735
8	Swedes Forest Fen	Fee Title	Redwood	140			318132	4947385
9	Boiling Springs Prairie	Fee Title	Redwood	100			315016	4948856
12	Minnesota Falls Outcrops	Fee Title	Yellow Medicine	200			297829	49639229
13	Minnesota Falls Outcrops	Easement	Yellow Medicine	500			299349	4962939
14	Gneiss Outcrops	Fee Title	Yellow Medicine	200			301542	4961501
15	Camp 35 Prairie	Easement	Renville	40			359393	4924235
16	Ridgely 5 Prairie	Easement	Nicollet	60			363917	4922569

NOTES: These listed complexes are compiled from DNR Ecological Resources and in some cases involve multiple landowners. These complexes fall with in the 4 Key Target Areas of the project proposal. From this list and others that may develop if and when ENRTF appropriation is granted we will select the highest quality tracts from willing landowners for fee title acquisitions in cooperation with DNR Ecological Resources. The Parcel Name section that identifies 3 Acquisition Types as possible Easements will be turned over to the DNR Ecological Resource Division.

Minnesota River Valley Green Corridors Phase II



Organizational Description

Name - Redwood Area Communities Foundation dba Green Corridor Inc.

The Redwood Area Communities Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization established in 1988 for civic, charitable, benevolent, educational, cultural and other eligible purposes as approved by its board of directors. The Foundation is managed by a volunteer board of directors that meet on a regular basis to review sponsorship requests and conduct business. RACF enables Redwood County organizations to concentrate on program development instead of the administrative details of forming a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. Currently the RACF assists 32 subsidiaries (entities) with management of over \$2.5 million. The RACF acts as an “incubator for the nonprofit community.” We provide a vehicle for benevolent individuals to give back to Redwood County.

Each Subsidiary Fund retains its own identity. The subsidiary is responsible for the conduct of the project. The subsidiary is responsible for liability issues for its project. Each Subsidiary Fund retains local control and decision making of their program and funds. The RACF provides administration, accounting and money management so that subsidiaries can focus on their program.

The Redwood Area Communities Foundation does not employ staff. All administrative activities are managed through a contract for service with the Redwood Area Development Corporation.

The Green Corridor Board of Directors is responsible for their mission, goals and projects. The Board makes all decisions and is responsible for conducting business.

Green Corridor Inc. is a regional initiative governed by a seven (7) member Board of Directors. Two (2) Redwood Area Development Corporation staff serve as ex-officio members on the Green Corridor Board of Directors. The mission statement for Green Corridor reads; “Creating a legacy of natural resource protection, habitat connectivity, public access, and outdoor recreation which’s promotes economic growth and tourism.” Green Corridor Inc. and their many stakeholders recognizes the connection between providing a wide variety of high quality outdoor recreational opportunities which can play a vital role in creating or enhancing regional economic growth, development, and tourism by working in concert with local, state, and federal agencies, community/civic groups, and businesses.

Program Manager Qualifications

Bradley H. Cobb – Green Corridor Inc. will contract project manager activities with Bradley H. Cobb who has successfully implemented the \$1,000,000 Minnesota River Valley Green Corridor Phase I – FY08 LCCMR grant under a similar relationship with the Southwest Initiative Foundation. He also successfully secured and currently managing the \$1,617,000 Green Corridor Legacy Program – FY10 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) funded by the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF). And has secured and will manage a FY11 LSOHC recommendation for \$1,651,000 which is proceeding through the 2010 legislative appropriation process. Bradley H. Cobb has nearly 25 years experience in wildlife and conservation activities; has served on the MN DNR Game & Fish Fund Budget Oversight Committee for seven (7) years from 2002-2009 – the last three (3) years as chairman. Mr. Cobb received the 2003 MN DNR Division of Wildlife Special Recognition of Year Award for his “outstanding contributions to farmland conservation”, and received the 2007 Pheasants Forever Volunteer of the Year Award. Mr. Cobb currently serves on several DNR advisory committees and is a volunteer advisor to several area/regional wildlife organizations.

