

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

LCCMR ID: 117-D

Project Title: Restoring Native Habitat/Water Quality to Shell Rock River

Category: D. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Total Project Budget: \$ \$2,576,500

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 0

Summary:

Acquire fee title to 257 acres that encompasses the Shell Rock River Headwaters; the District will own and manage this property to improve habitat, water quality and public recreation.

Name: Andy Henschel

Sponsoring Organization: Shell Rock River Watershed District

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Location

Region: SE

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

County Name: Freeborn

City / Township: Albert Lea

_____ 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: Restoring Native Habitat/Water Quality to Headwaters of Shell Rock River

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The Shell Rock River Watershed District has proposed acquiring fee title to 257 acres of land that encompasses the headwaters of the Shell Rock River where it flows from Albert Lea Lake. The parcel, bounded on the north by Freeborn County Road 19 and Albert Lea Lake, has an old concrete dam (Albert Lea Dam) that controls the water level for Albert Lea Lake at the headwaters of the Shell Rock River. The Shell Rock River flows south through the middle of the parcel to be purchased. Currently the old dam is in disrepair and at risk of failure. The SRRWD has entered into negotiations for the purchase of the property and has developed a long range resource management plan to replace the old dam. A new variable crest structure will allow water level control for possible Albert Lea Lake Management.

Shell Rock River Watershed District (SRRWD) Management Plan developed in 2004 has identified goals for implementing programs for improved habitat, water quality and flood control. Acquiring the 257 acre parcel allows SRRWD to meet these goals and open opportunities for the public that includes recreation, hunting, fishing and educational experiences incorporated in the habitat and recreational development plan for the project.

The project is time sensitive, it is essential the District acquire this land to secure a US Army Corps of Engineers 206 Federal Grant for replacement of the current dam. The USCOE 206 Grant requires the District owns the property adjoining the dam. The variable crest dam will allow for management of game fish and rough fish passage and the ability to manage water levels, facilitating shoreline and littoral area restoration of Albert Lea Lake. As part of the purchase agreement for the 257 acre land parcel the landowner has agreed to donate an additional 70 acres of land to the SRRWD. This proposed donation is within the statutory boundary of Helmer Myre State Park and would allow for habitat restoration and expanded public use, possibly as an extension of Helmer Myre State Park.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: 257 Acre Land Acquisition

Budget: \$2,560,000

The Shell Rock River Watershed District has proposed acquiring fee title to 257 acres of land adjoining the City of Albert Lea and Albert Lea Lake that encompasses the headwaters of the Shell Rock River. The parcel has various natural amenities that include the headwaters and 1.4 miles of the River, floodplain and mesic hardwood forest, undisturbed highly diversified wetland complexes and riparian and stream bank corridor on a parcel that is a mile long and approximately ½ mile wide. Parts of the site have undisturbed native plant communities, other parts are thought to have pre-historic Native American habitation sites and others have been mined for sand and gravel. Opportunities of native habitat restoration for the parcel include seed bank development, wetland creation and restoration, native prairie establishment, floodplain forest and mesic forest restoration and shoreland restoration of the Shell Rock River. The parcel can provide unique recreational opportunities to utilize the River for canoeing and fishing. The lands can be developed to include: nature trails, interpretative programs about ecology, water and archeology, both day use and camping. The development of a resource inventory and management plan would address all the opportunities for public ownership and use of the parcel.

Outcome	Completion Date
<i>1. Purchase of the 257 Acre Parcel</i>	<i>August 31, 2011</i>
<i>2. Donation from landowner of a 70 acre parcel located within the statutory boundary of Helmer Myre State Park</i>	<i>August 31, 2011</i>

Activity 2: Habitat and Recreation Development Plan and Long-Term Habitat Management Plan.

The habitat development portion of the Plan will include protection, preservation and enhancement of the existing natural resources, such as wetland and forest restoration, sediment retention, aquatic and shoreline restorations. The Plan also will include restorations and habitat structures for amphibians and reptiles, aggregate resource and sand pit restoration plans. The District will work in conjunction with local DNR Fish and Wildlife agencies to establish a fisheries management plan for the Shell Rock River, a fish rearing basin and wetland habitats, located on the existing site. The recreation development portion of the Plan will include walking trails with interpretive information and recreational access. The Long-Term Habitat Management Plan will identify the baseline environmental conditions on the site, the conditions proposed for the project and how these conditions will be maintained in the future.

Budget: \$16,500

Outcome	Completion Date
<i>1. Complete Habitat and Recreation Development Plan for the 257 acre parcel.</i>	<i>Dec. 31, 2011</i>
<i>2. Complete Habitat and Recreation Management Plan for the 257 acre parcel. The Long-Term Habitat Management Plan will be developed identifying the baseline environmental conditions on site, the conditions proposed for the project and how these conditions will be maintained in the future.</i>	<i>March 31, 2012</i>

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

The Shell Rock River Watershed District will be the fiscal agent receiving funds for the project. The following local agencies will assist by providing technical input: Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District, Minnesota Natural Resources Conservation Service, Freeborn County, US Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Albert Lea. Outside services required to complete the project include environmental, GIS, engineering and construction.

B. Timeline Requirements

Currently the SRRWD has entered into an agreement with the current landowner that defines the purchase price of the property. The goal for timeline requirements of the master planning and development effort of this project is approximately 2 ½ years.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

Future long-term priorities for the project include natural resource restoration, management and enhancement, in addition future facility development that may include campgrounds, walking trails, canoe access and various other amenities determined in the habitat and recreation development plan efforts. Requests in the future to the LCCMR for this project could include continued requests for acquisition funds, natural resource restoration funds for the purpose of restoring and managing plant communities and recreation development funds for future project facilities.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

BUDGET ITEM <i>(See list of Eligible & Non-Eligible Costs, p. 13)</i>	AMOUNT
Personnel:	
Contracts:	
Professional/Technical - Comprehensive Habitat and Recreation Development and Long-Term Management Plan to create environmental habitats native to the eco-regions open to public recreation. The District will use a competitive selection process, based on qualifications.	\$ 16,500
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):	
257 Acres - Fee Title, Shell Rock River Watershed District will own fee title.	\$ 2,560,000
Travel:	
Additional Budget Items:	
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 2,576,500

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:		
US Army Corps of Engineers 206 Grant for replacement of Albert Lea Dam located on the 257 acre parcel.	\$4,865,900	Pending on land purchase
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:		
In-kind Services During Project Period:		
Independent appraisal of 257 acre property, provided by SSRWD	\$ 8,000	
Land transaction costs including attorney and realtor fees, provided by SRRWD	\$ 15,000	
Physical Agents - project management costs, provided by SRRWD	\$ 25,000	
Site management- maintenance, monitoring, and property improvements, provided by SRRWD	\$ 100,000	
SRRWD Staff assistance on the Habitat and Recreation Development Plan	\$ 7,000	
SRRWD Staff assistance on the Long - Term Habitat Management Plan	\$ 3,000	
Shell Rock River Watershed District's Local Option Sales Tax is commitment to the US Army Corps of Engineers 206 Grant.	\$2,620,100	Pending on land purchase
70 Acre Land Donation to Shell Rock River Watershed District land value is based dollar amount per acre for the 257 acre land parcel. This parcel is within the statutory boundary of Helmer Myre State Park	\$697,270	Pending on land purchase
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable):		
Funding History:		

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

Project Manager Name: Shell Rock River Watershed District - Andy Henschel

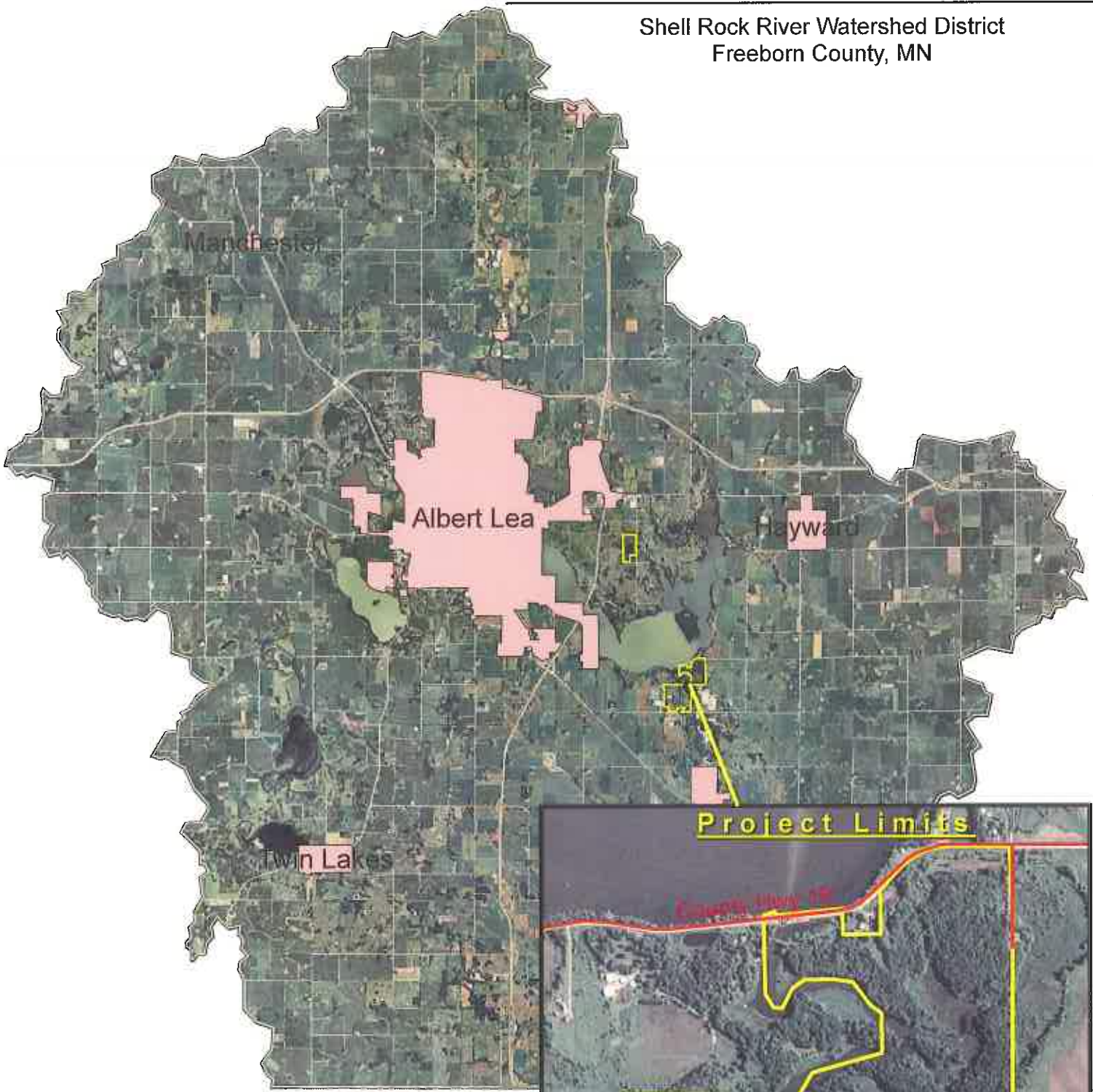
Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund \$ Request: \$2,576,239.00

Final Title Holder(s): Shell Rock River Watershed District

#	Parcel Name	Acquisition Type (Fee-Title OR Conservation Easement)	County	Estimated # of Acres	Geographical Coordinates			
					Latitude	Longitude	UTM-X	UTM-Y
1	257 Acre Parcel	Fee-Title	Freeborn	257			476600	4828330
NOTES:								

Restoring Native Habitats and Water Quality to the Head Waters of Shell Rock River

Shell Rock River Watershed District
Freeborn County, MN



1 inch equals 13,576 feet

SRRWD Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description

SSRWD Watershed Conservationist/Project Manager – Andy Henschel

Shell Rock River Watershed District (2007 to Present):

- Watershed Technician
- Project Manager for all watershed district projects, previous projects include: Flood Mitigation Project – South Industrial Park, 3 electrical fish barriers, Pollution Prevention Program /Onsite Sewer Compliance and water monitoring programs.

Freeborn County Watershed Field Technician (2001 – 2007):

- Performed county inspections and enforced County septic ordinances, worked with small communities on wastewater treatment projects, established County water monitoring program. Aided in re-writing the Freeborn County Water Plan

Education:

- B.S. in Environmental Science and Geography.
- Minor in Biology with a GIS Specialty.
- Erosion/Sediment Control Specialist

Organizational Description

Shell Rock River Watershed District – was established on June 25, 2003 by citizen petition. In 2004, the District finalized the SRRWD Water Management Plan, to address all water quality issues. The District covers about 246 square miles, within Freeborn County. The District has 7 Board Managers and 5 employees.

The District is blessed with 12 Lakes and is located in the Western Corn Belt Region of Southern Minnesota. Albert Lea Lake is the first lake you see when traveling north, on Interstate 35, into Minnesota. All water within the District drains to a common point – the Shell Rock River. The Shell Rock River flows into the Cedar in Iowa and finally the Mississippi Rivers.

The District has been aggressively working to solve problems that have resulted in 3 lakes and the Shell Rock River to be listed on the MPCA's impaired waters list. Accomplishments include: implementing filter strip program, Pollution Prevention Program /Onsite Sewer Compliance, wetland reclamation, water retention areas, 3 electric fish barriers, urban and rural BMPs, and many other projects that address water quality issues.

The mission of the Shell Rock River Watershed District (SRRWD) is to implement reasonable and necessary improvements to the water-related and other natural resources of the District. The Board of Manager oversees many efforts to conserve, protect and manage water resources of the watershed. The SRRWD works closely with the City of Albert Lea, Freeborn County, Farm Service Agency, state agencies, and active citizen volunteers to improve water quality.

