

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

LCCMR ID: 218-H

Project Title: Minnesota River Water Trail: Leveraging Existing Public Access

Category: H. Other Ideas

Total Project Budget: \$ \$225,000

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

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 0

Summary:

Existing Minnesota River State Water Trail facilities are documented, evaluated, and redesigned in 17 ten-mile segments to enhance recreational use, reduce negative environmental impacts, and connect to terrestrial amenities.

Name: Mary Vogel

Sponsoring Organization: U of MN - Center for Changing Landscapes

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Location

Region: SW

Ecological Section: North Central Glaciated Plains (251B)

County Name: Blue Earth, Brown, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Nicollet, Redwood, 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 Water Trail: Leveraging Existing Public Assets

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

This project evaluates existing Minnesota River State Water Trail facilities on *public* lands on the 170 miles from the Lac qui Parle Dam to Mankato and creates plans/designs/redesigns to improve them. It builds on the Green Corridor work (45miles), National Park Service visioning assistance, new public land acquisitions in the Valley, & county bike trail planning. It links the existing resources: National Scenic Byway, the Minnesota River State Trail work for bicycling, the Minnesota River Treadway Horse Trail, the snowmobile trail system, county and state parks, SNAs, WMAs, AMAs, and the extensive active river-based citizen advocacy to enhance the existing Water Trail and its environs in order to realize the river's potential as the area's major recreational asset.

Currently the river has 8 canoe & 25 boat accesses, 17 campsites 3 campgrounds, 2 rest areas. The project evaluates the condition and location of existing facilities to determine: Do they meet current recreational needs? Contribute to the river's degradation and environmental problems? Do they need replacement? Are they connected to other existing recreational amenities or systems? Etc. Facility improvements/additions and elements that link to terrestrial historic and natural resource sites, and parks and trails will be redesigned, designed, and planned. These will be prioritized through a community engaged decision-making process that brings local advocacy groups and state and local officials together to create an action agenda that will inform local and state efforts to implement the improvements.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Collect & analyze data; identify issues for the Water Trail.

Budget: \$30,000

Data describing the physical environment from both the natural systems and cultural perspectives will be gathered from site visits, previous DNR work, NPS visioning assistance work, existing data sources, previous legislation & studies, and public input from three public meetings. Water trail & environmental characteristics; local, regional, and state resource areas of interest; and campsites, canoe & boat accesses, toilets, etc. will be analyzed. Work with the DNR, county, community, citizens, and trail groups will ensure local, user, and management input on natural resource, recreational, tourism, and community issues and needs for Trail upgrades and enhancements that will create sustainable facilities.

Outcome	Completion
1. Three public meetings: Mankato, Redwood Falls/New Ulm area, and Montevideo	Dec. 2011
2. River and river valley data compiled, analyzed, and mapped. The facilities' conditions & environmental issues identified.	Dec. 2011
3. Water Trail facilities needs identified; existing public lands/facilities opportunities identified. Environmental strategies to mitigate problems & create sustainability identified.	Dec. 2011

Activity 2: Identify character-driven river segments & special places. Create preliminary design alternatives for the facilities that address recreational needs, connect to existing facilities, celebrate the different river segments' character, and improve the river's environmental quality

Budget: \$80,000

Because the river and its landscapes change character along its course, the data gathered in Activity 1 will be used to document the variety of special places and types of experiences that the river and its environs offer. Preliminary designs for existing facilities, environmental interpretation elements, and places that celebrate the unique character of each river segment, and connections to facilities will be created.

Outcome	Completion
1. Experience-driven segments and special places identified.	Sept. 2012
2. Evaluations of each 10-mile river-stretch: existing Water Trail facilities & needed new canoe & boat accesses, campsites, picnic areas, potable water, restrooms, trash, etc.	Sept. 2012
3. Potential links to other recreational systems and facilities identified.	Sept. 2010
4. Ten or more preliminary facility design/redesigns.	Sept. 2012

5. Draft of the Minnesota River Water Trail brochure	Sept. 2012
Activity 3: <u>Present plans/designs/redesigns for feedback</u> Budget: \$15,000	
Three to 6 public meetings for feedback on the design/plans will be held. Local and state officials and special interest groups (trail and environmental groups, tourism organizations, other citizen organizations, & citizens) will be encouraged to actively participate in the design/redesign/plan review & discussions.	
Outcomes	Completion
1. 3-6 public meetings held Mankato, Redwood Falls, New Ulm, & Montevideo areas.	Oct. 2010
2. Critiques of the plans/redesigns/designs from the meetings	Oct. 2010
3. Implementation priorities established in response to the grassroots input.	Oct. 2010
Activity 4: <u>Refine and Complete Plans/Designs</u> Budget: \$75,000	
The final designs for the Water Trail and its connections to other systems completed.	
Outcomes	Completion
1. A plan for siting the facilities along the Water Trail: Lac qui Parle Dam-Mankato.	June 2013
2. Site designs for 10-30 recreational facilities address environmental problems and the recreational needs associated with the Trail & the sites.	June 2013
3. Strategies to strengthen connections between the Water Trail and other existing Minnesota River Valley recreational facilities and systems.	June 2013
4. Signature elements (signs, logo, kiosk, brochure, etc) strengthen the Trail's identity.	June 2013
Activity 5: <u>Publish Redesigns/Designs/Plans Report in Print & Digital Form</u> Budget: \$25,000	
Outcome	Completion
1. The Minnesota River State Water Trail Plan; signature elements, designs for specific trail-related areas; and a trail brochure will be produced in a report in both printed and digital graphic format. It will be understandable, accessible, and useful tools for state planning & management, local trail initiatives, state funding, & local implementation efforts.	June 2013

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Design/Planning Team (receives funding): Center for Changing Landscapes U of MN, Lead: Mary Vogel
 Project Partners(receives funding): MN River Valley Scenic By-way Alliance, MN River Watershed Alliance, DNR Parks and Trails Division, National Park Service: Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program, Redwood Area Communities Foundation, Renville & Redwood EDA, & MN Trail Riders Association Redwood Falls Chamber and Tourism, Renville County Historical Society and Museum, Green Corridor Inc, CURE, Olivia/212 Area Chamber of Commerce, Tatanka Bluffs Corridor Inc., Redwood Area Development Corporation, Amigo Riders Saddle Club, and Redwood Valley Riders Club. Many others pending

B. Timeline Requirements

This project will take two years to complete.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

- The project report is a resource that informs updating the outdated the management plan for the wild and scenic river portion of the Minnesota River and addresses future implementation costs and needs.
- The project help position the Minnesota River as the prime recreational/environmental asset that runs through and unites all the recreational assets of the Valley and will help position the State Water Trail to receive funding from the Parks & Trails Legacy Fund and other funding sources for the implementation of its recommendations.
- The Minnesota Conservation Corps is a potential builder of many of the trail elements.
- The brochure will increase the identity of the river and its use as a recreational resource.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

INSTRUCTIONS AND TEMPLATE (1 PAGE LIMIT)

Attach budget, in MS-EXCEL format, to your "2011-2012 LCCMR Proposal Submit Form".

(1-page limit, single-sided, 10 pt. font minimum. Retain bold text and DELETE all instructions typed in italics. ADD OR DELETE ROWS AS NECESSARY. If a category is not applicable write "N/A", leave it blank, or delete the row.)

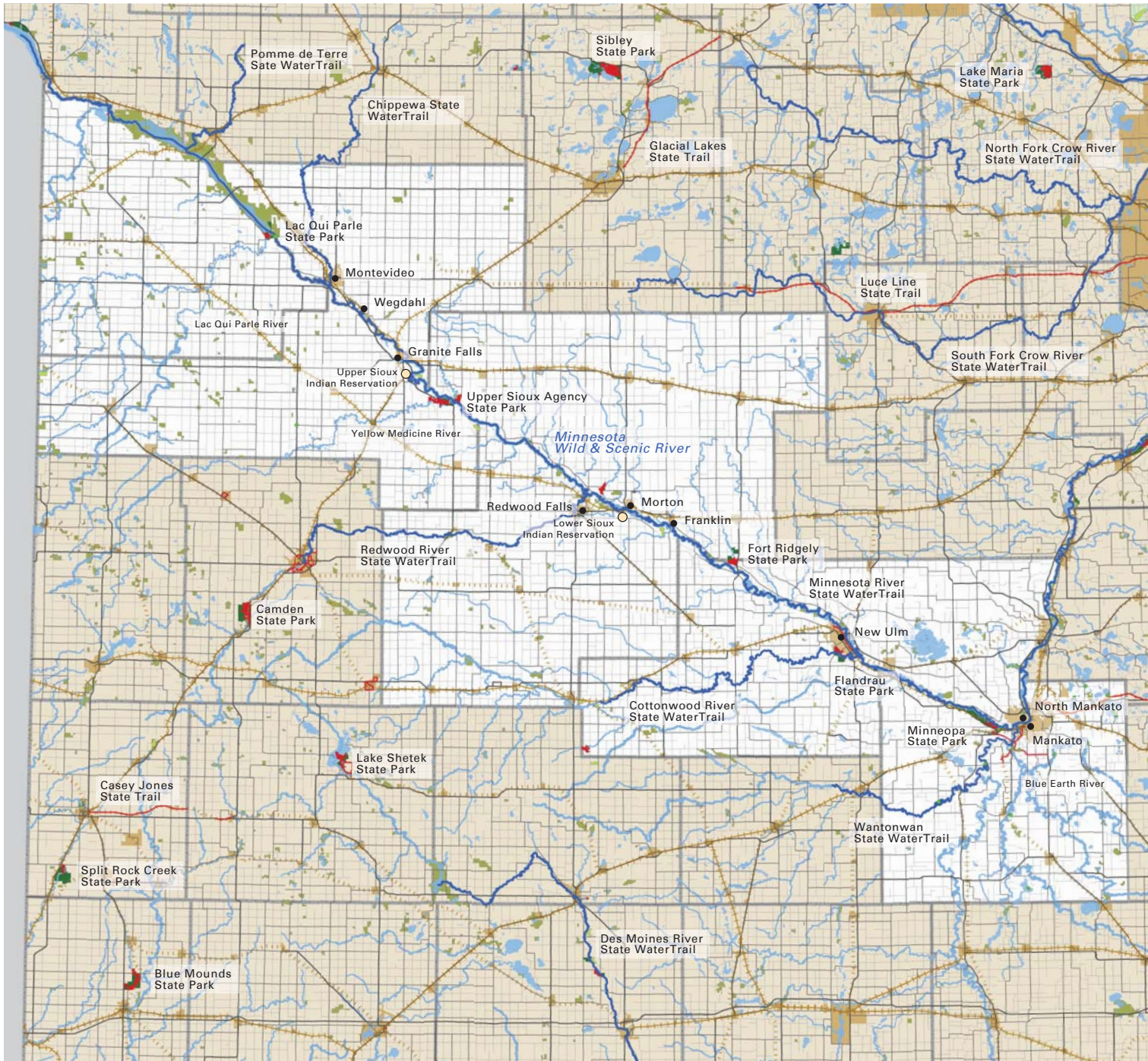
IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET [Insert # of years for project] years

BUDGET ITEM (See list of Eligible & Non-Eligible Costs, p. 13)	AMOUNT
Personnel:	
Mary Vogel - Co-Director (24% for two years) \$46,856 salary, \$3,144 fringe benefits	\$ 50,000
Research Fellows (2 @ 75% FTE for two years) \$116,287 salary, \$23,141 fringe benefits	\$ 139,428
Sr. Research Fellows (100 hours at \$75/ hour) \$7,500 salary, \$500 fringe benefits	\$ 8,000
Staff Support - average of 8% FTE dedicated staff support \$9,993 salary, \$4,007 fringe benefits	\$ 14,000
Contracts:	\$ -
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: drafting and paper supplies	\$ 3,000
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):	\$ -
Travel mileage hotel & meals for site visits for data gathering & analysis ; and community meetings	\$ 7,572
Additional Budget Items: copying: data, designs, presentation materials for meetings & final report	\$ 3,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 225,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
	\$ -	Indicate: Secured or Pending
	\$ -	Indicate: Secured or Pending
	?	
	\$ -	Indicate: Unspent? Not Legally Obligated? Other?
Funding History: Indicate funding secured prior to July 1, 2011 for activities directly relevant to this specific funding request. State specific source(s) of funds.	\$ -	

Minnesota River Water Trail: Leveraging Existing Public Assets



Minnesota River State Water Trail

- Designated as a Canoe and Boating Route (now called a "Water Trail") in 1963, one of the first four to be designated in the State.
- The DNR works with local units of government to routinely maintain Water Trail facilities, often in response to requests/complaints about individual facilities. However, facilities developed over 20 years ago often do not serve the recreational needs of today, and may be in need of replacement or major renovation. Twenty-five years ago, the average motor boat in Minnesota was 14' long with a 15 hp motor. Today, it is 17' long with a 100 hp motor. This new generation of boats requires a completely different type of ramp and parking lot.
- The DNR Water Trails Program recognizes the Minnesota River's active grassroots citizen activism as a great opportunity to draw attention to the phenomenal natural resources that the Minnesota River Water Trail has to offer.
- Kayaking is increasing on the Minnesota River and in the State. In the last five years, kayak registrations have increase 56% statewide.
- Only a small portion of the Water Recreation fund is currently invested in the Water Trails Program.

Wild and Scenic Minnesota River

- Wild and Scenic river extends from the Lac qui Parle Dam to Franklin, 102 miles.
- The River's management plan (1977) is decades out of date, this project can move the updating of the plan forward.
- The planned fee title and conservation easement acquisitions originally identified within the Minnesota River Management Plan (MN Rule 6105.1240) have not moved forward since the wild and scenic designation in 1977.
- The project builds on existing public land.



Blue Earth, Brown, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Nicollet, Redwood, Renville, Yellow Medicine Counties

Project Manager Qualifications & Organization Description

Project Manager:

Mary Vogel, Co-Director, Center for Changing Landscapes

Mary Vogel is the co-director with Alan Ek of the Center for Changing Landscapes and has led a broad range of community engaged research projects that have focused on the intersection of natural resource preservation, resource management, and sustainable development issues throughout the State of Minnesota. She has worked extensively on state and local recreational trails. She has been a leader at the University and in her college in interdisciplinary efforts to connect University expertise to applied research efforts that address important Minnesota issues. She is skilled at producing usable project work that informs public and private decision makers at the state, regional, and local levels.

She has extensive experience in engaging citizens in research efforts. Her research is community engaged and for three years she was the statewide director of the University of Minnesota's Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, a citizen driven program that focuses on natural resources, sustainable agriculture, and natural resource based tourism.

She is very familiar with both the LCMR and the LCCMR and has led many projects funded by the LCMR. Her education includes the Master of Architecture, (M Arch) University of Minnesota. She participated in the team that wrote the LCCMR's *Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan*; she co-led the recreation efforts.

Organization:

Center for Changing Landscapes

College of Design & College of Food, Agriculture, and Natural Sciences

University of Minnesota

Description: The Center for Changing Landscapes is an interdisciplinary research and outreach center in two colleges. The Center's work combines design/planning expertise with natural resource expertise and knowledge to support land use decision-making at the local, regional and state levels to protect, preserve, and enhance Minnesota's landscapes and their related natural and environmental resources in the face of changing development patterns and resource use. Hallmarks of the Center's environmentally sensitive work are its quality, relevance, and publicly engaged character.

Environmentally Informed & Honored Work: The Center's recent environmentally driven work has focused on large linear regional infrastructure (state trails, transit corridors, scenic byways, and highways), their local connections, and the communities along them in rural, suburban, and urban landscapes. Its regional, district, and site scale design/plan work has received many design awards and has been used by citizens, advocacy groups, local units of government, and state agencies to plan, promote, and fund environmentally informed projects all over Minnesota. Some publications are at ccl.design.umn.edu.

Staff: Alan Ek of Forest Resources and Mary Vogel of the College of Design co-direct the Center, and it is staffed by very skilled, experienced landscape architects, architects, urban designers, natural resource professionals/professors and talented recent graduates and graduate students.

Community, Citizen & Government Connections: The Center's projects are informed by working with citizens, citizen groups, and governmental units. Examples of some of those that we have worked include: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Minnesota Forest Resources Council, Metropolitan Council, Metropolitan Transit, Arrowhead Redevelopment Commission, USDA Forest Service, Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership, Minnesota Association of County Land Commissioners, Saint Paul, Golden Valley, Saint Louis Park, Minnetonka, Thief River Falls, Crookston, Fisher, East Grand Forks, Red Lake Falls, New Ulm, Saint Peter, Marshall, Fisher, Saint Hilaire, Beaver Bay, Knife River, Tofte, Grand Marais, Bovey, Coleraine, Knife River, New York Mills, North Shore Scenic Byway, Duluth Township, Lutsen, Lyon County, Saint Louis County, Cook County, Lake County, Sherburne County, many trail groups, private consulting firms, etc.