

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2012-2013 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 064-D6

MeCC VII - 3.3: Priority Expansion of Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Topic Area: D. Land Acquisition & Restoration

Total Project Budget: \$ 1,000,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 2 yrs, July 2013 - June 2015

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 500,000

Summary:

Minnesota Valley Trust will acquire in fee 250 acres to expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, improving wildlife habitat and water quality and increasing public access to wildlife-dependent recreation.

Name: Deborah Loon

Sponsoring Organization: MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.

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Bloomington MN 55425

Telephone Number: (612) 801-1935

Email DebLoon@comcast.net

Web Address www.mnvalleytrust.org

Location

Region: Central, Metro, SE

County Name: Carver, Hennepin, Le Sueur, Scott, Sibley

City / Township: TBD

<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"/> %



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) 2012-2013 Main Proposal

PROJECT TITLE: Priority Expansion of the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge, MeCC VII

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Minnesota Valley Trust (MVT) will protect through fee title acquisition at least 250 acres to expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), as delineated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). MVT will protect through fee title acquisition at least an additional 125 acres in the Refuge expansion areas with other, non-state funds, for a total addition of 375 acres to the Refuge.

The Refuge expansion units have been prioritized by the USFWS through a public planning process as having strong potential to provide high quality habitat for wildlife and opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation. The lands are primarily along the Minnesota River and include river frontage, floodplain and cropland. Potential parcels to acquire for Refuge expansion are located in the following units of the Refuge -- Blakely (Sibley County), Jessenland (Scott and LeSueur Counties), and St. Lawrence (Scott County).

This project will:

- Provide quality habitat for migrant and resident wildlife species, protect the diversity of native ecosystems, and continue to improve ecosystem connectivity and resilience
- Increase breeding and migratory habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, neo-tropical migrants, and other species including non-migratory resident species.
- Improve water quality by retiring and restoring croplands in the Minnesota River Valley to the natural habitats of floodplain forest, wetlands and prairie.
- Expand the public’s access to lands in and near the Twin Cities metropolitan area for wildlife-dependent recreational activities, such as birding, photography, hiking, interpretation, hunting and fishing.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge **Budget:** \$ 1,000,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Fee title acquisition of 250 acres for priority expansion of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge	June 30, 2015

At least 250 acres will be acquired in fee title with the grant to expand one or more of the following units of the Refuge – Blakely (Sibley County), Jessenland (Scott and LeSueur Counties) and St. Lawrence (Scott County). The expansion lands have been prioritized by the USFWS through a public planning process. The MVT is working with willing landowners who are interested in selling their land for inclusion in the Refuge.

An additional 125 or more acres will be acquired for the Refuge by the Trust using other, non-state funds. Following acquisition, the MVT and USFWS will develop a restoration and management plan, then restore and enhance the floodplain forest, wetlands and prairie. Cropland will be retired and drain tile broken.

Following restoration, the lands acquired will be donated to the USFWS for perpetual management for wildlife and wildlife-dependent recreation as part of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. will receive the grant funds to manage and complete this project. MVT will work in close coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The MN Valley Trust is part of the Metropolitan Conservation Corridors Partnership.

B. Timeline Requirements

Activities will begin July 1, 2013 and be completed no later than June 30, 2015.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

The fee title acquisition activities are part of a larger strategy to expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge according to an expansion plan developed by the USFWS. To-date, the Minnesota Valley Trust has acquired 3,001 acres to expand the Refuge. Acquisition of approximately 9,000 additional acres over time will complete the expansion units. The partners will continue working to complete these units and will pursue funding through federal, state and private sources. We will leverage the Minnesota Valley Trust's funds to accomplish this work.

2012-2013 Proposed Acquisition List

Project Title: Priority Expansion of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, MeCC VII

Project Manager Name: Deborah Loon, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.

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

#	Parcel Name	Acquisition Type (Fee Title or Conservation Easement)	County	Ecological Significance	Proposed # of Acres	Proposed # of Shoreline Miles (if applicable)	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)
1	Blakely Unit Expansion	Fee Title	Scott	Floodplain forest, wetland and prairie	250	TBD	See note
2	Jessenland Unit Expansion	Fee Title	Sibley	Floodplain forest, wetland and prairie	250	TBD	See note
3	St. Lawrence Unit Expansion	Fee Title	Scott	Wetland and prairie	250	0	See note
7							
8							
9							
10							

NOTES: (1) Parcel search areas are within the Refuge expansion units, as delineated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through a planning process that combined data review, on the ground site review and public input. Most lands are within the Minnesota River floodplain, have river frontage or are contingent to parcels with river frontage, and contain floodplain forest, wetland and prairie, providing significant habitat for wildlife and wildlife-dependent recreation for the public. (2) The Initial fee title holder will be Minnesota Valley Lands, Inc. (subsidiary of Minnesota Valley Trust), while habitat restoration and enhancement is conducted. Eventual fee title holder will be Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge of the USFWS.

2012-2013 Detailed Project Budget

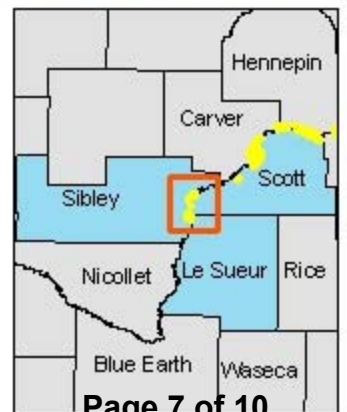
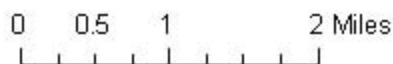
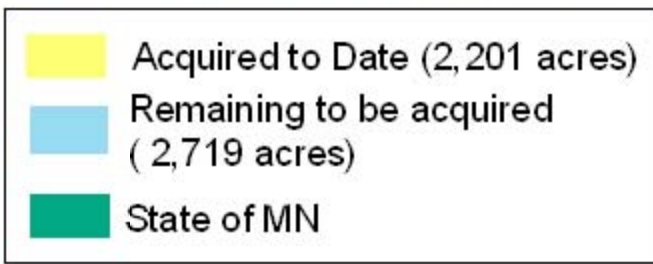
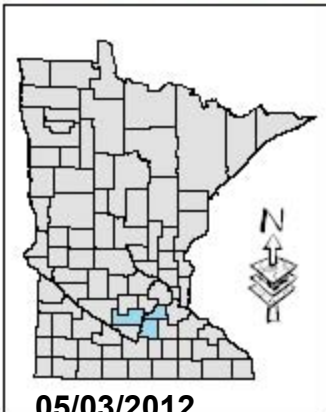
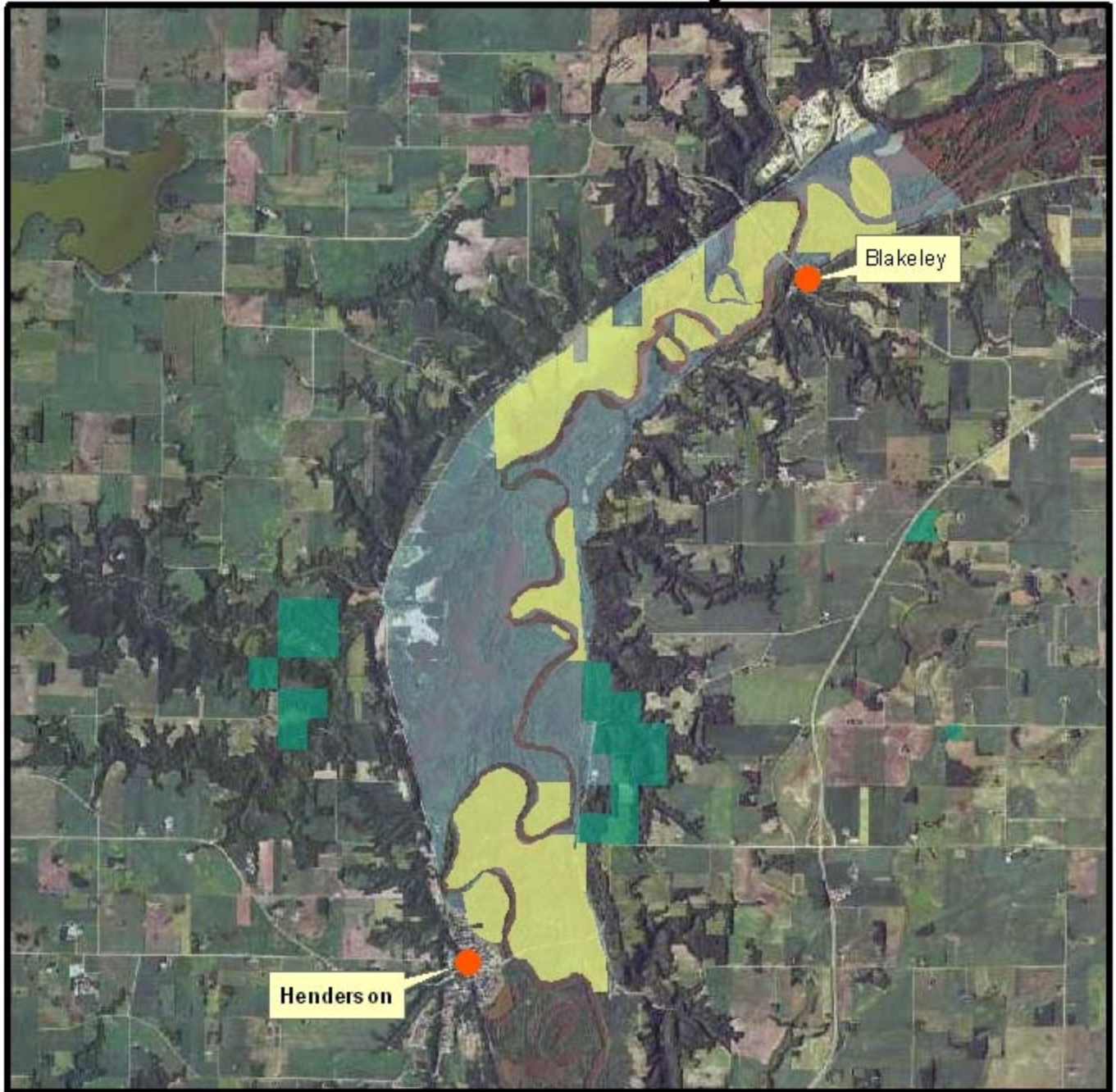
IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET - 2 years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): Fee title acquisition of 250 acres to expand the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Land acquired will be donated to the US Fish and Wildlife Service.	\$ 1,000,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 1,000,000

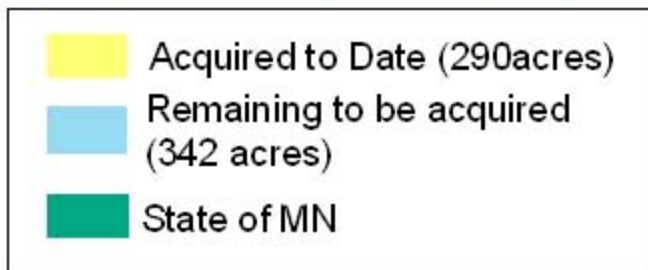
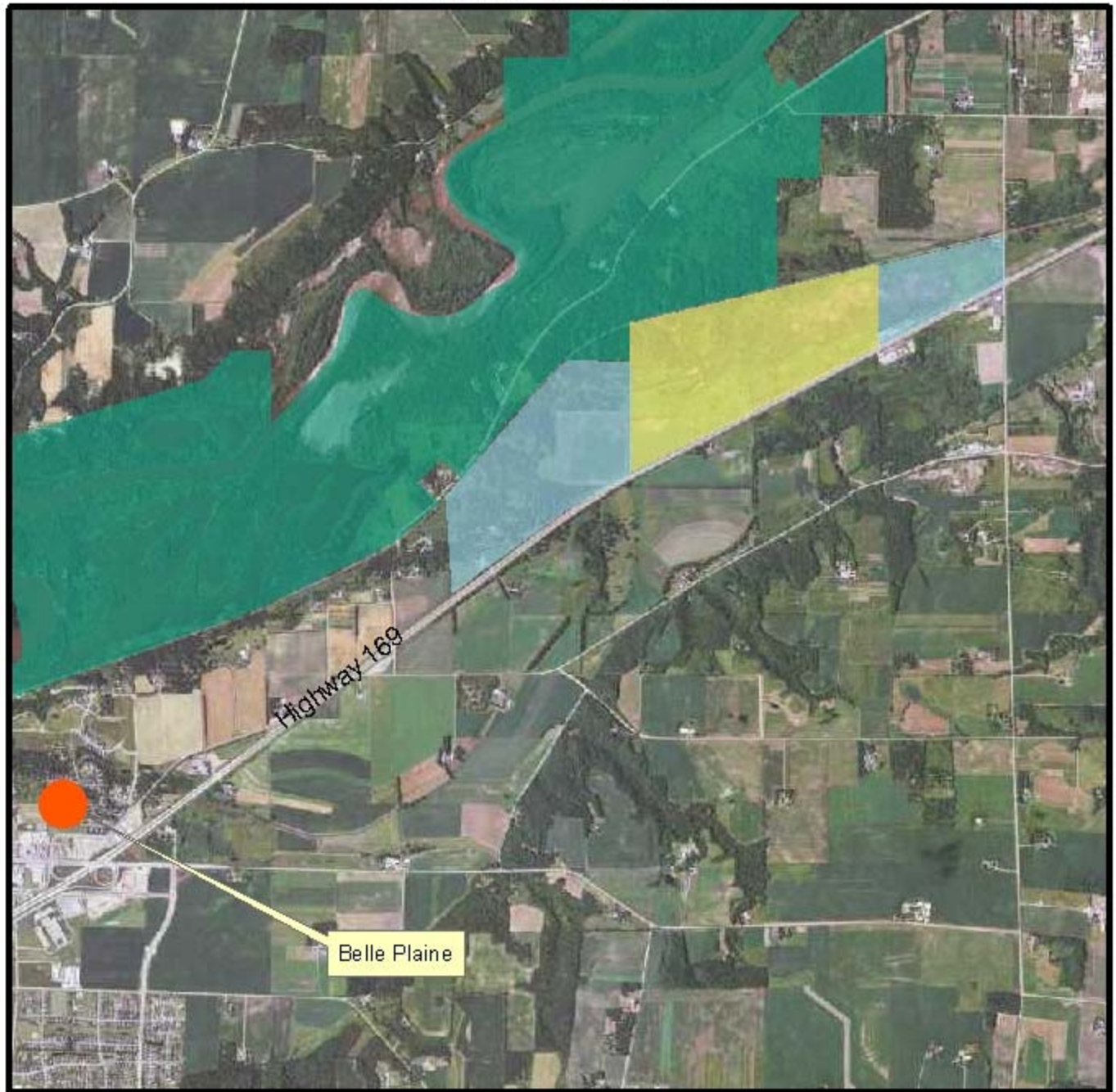
V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Source of funds is the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.	\$ 500,000	<i>Secured</i>
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: <i>None</i>	\$ -	<i>NA</i>
In-kind Services During Project Period: In-kind services will include professional staff services to manage and complete the acquisitions and restoration work by MN Valley Trust and USFWS, but are not estimated here.	\$ -	<i>NA</i>
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): MVT is working on and will complete MeCC Phase VI (2011 grant) by June 30, 2013. MVT has completed MeCC Phases I - V Supplemental; MVT has acquired the grant acres with the 2010 grant and will submit for reimbursement upon completion of the proposed leverage acres by June 30, 2012.	\$600,000	<i>Unspent - 2011 appropriation.</i>
Funding History: (2003) - \$290,000 ETF, \$1,137,030 other non-state funds Phase II (2005) - \$230,000 ETF and \$428,000 other non-state funds Phase III (2007) - \$210,000 ETF and \$376,473 other non-state funds Phase IV (2008) - \$225,000 ETF and \$198,985 other non-state funds Phase V (2009) - \$225,000 ETF and \$150,561 other non-state funds Supplemental (2010) - \$325,000 ETF, \$325,000 other non-state funds Phase VI (2011) - \$600,000 and \$550,000 other non-state funds TOTALS: \$1,815,000 ETF and \$2,029,019 other non-state funds	\$ 1,815,000	

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Expansion Jessenland & Blakeley Units



Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Expansion St. Lawrence Unit



PROJECT MANAGER QUALIFICATIONS

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.

The mission and activities of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust is to:

- Expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District (3,001 acres have been acquired to expand the Refuge and 1,903 acres have been acquired for Waterfowl Production Areas, as of March 31, 2012).
- Construct an environmental education and visitor center on the Minnesota Valley Refuge (completed in fall 2007 on the Rapids Lake Unit near Carver and Jordan).
- Complete habitat restoration of lands acquired, following plans developed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (work is ongoing).
- Construct new visitor access, education and interpretive facilities on the Minnesota Valley Refuge, including trails and parking lots (work is ongoing).

The Minnesota Valley Trust was established in 2001 to mitigate the impact of the thousands of flights sent over the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge from the new north-south runway at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

A 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization, the Minnesota Valley Trust works in cooperation with the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District. All properties acquired and constructed are donated by the Trust to the USFWS.

Deborah Loon, Project Manager

Deborah Loon has served as the executive director of the Minnesota Valley Trust almost since its inception in 2001. In that role, she is the liaison with the USFWS and is the primary contact with all landowners and local communities. She also provides support to the Trust Board of Directors.

Loon also serves as the executive director of Minnesota Valley Lands, Inc., the subsidiary to the Trust that holds title to the acquired lands and oversees all management and restoration of the lands.

Loon brings extensive experience in project management and organizational leadership for both nonprofit and for-profit organizations. She has a BA in political science from St. Olaf College.

