

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

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 074-D

Americas Great Outdoors (AGO) Minnesota River Corridor Enhancement

Topic Area: D. Land Acquisition & Restoration

Total Project Budget: \$ 1,677,900

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 yrs, July 2013 - June 2016

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 40,000

Summary:

This multifunctional landscape is enhanced through integration of conservation; rural community and volunteer involvement; and diverse agricultural BMPs, maximizing ecological and economic potential within the Minnesota River Valley corridor.

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Sponsoring Organization: MN DNR

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Location

Region: Central, SW

County Name: Big Stone, Brown, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Nicollet, Redwood, Renville, Swift, Yellow Medicine

City / Township:

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ Employment	_____ TOTAL _____%



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2012-2013 Main Proposal

PROJECT TITLE: America’s Great Outdoors (AGO) Minnesota River Corridor Enhancement

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Intensive work by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the MN River Valley and recent federal recognition has resulted in an increased demand/need to focus on the upper 185 miles of the Minnesota River valley. High citizen and agency focus in this area is partly due to the high quality and large amount of remaining native plant communities.

Three main project goals in this scenic corridor are to: 1) Improve water quality and biodiversity through protection and restoration of high quality habitats in the River Valley and its watershed, 2) Increase the many types of outdoor recreational opportunities, and 3) Increase awareness and stewardship of the intrinsic cultural and natural features.

This initiative works towards creating a rich mosaic of public and private conservation lands connecting local communities and visitors with public lands and waters; natural areas; and scenic, historic and water trails and byways. Restored riverine and prairie habitat will provide cleaner water for fish, wildlife and people. Enhanced recreational experiences and learning opportunities about the river’s natural and cultural history will be available to visitors. This restored and shared landscape will attract new users and businesses, providing economic vitality and a better quality of life in the region.

Project Summary#

Conserving natural and cultural resources; restoring critical habitats; improving water quality and optimizing recreational opportunities benefits residents and visitors of the Upper Minnesota River while positioning the corridor for a National Blueway designation. Leveraging partnerships between government units, NGOs, Tribal communities, and landowners to implement restoration strategies along with working lands approaches will result in connecting more people to the Minnesota River Valley thereby increasing the stewardship potential in this unique region of our state.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: *Citizen and Business Engagement*

Budget: \$235,100

Engage corridor residents, recreational users and businesses to complete Blueway designation implementation plan, recreational gap analysis and 4 site designs that are cost-effective, environmentally sustainable and of high recreational value. Results will form the basis of a 2 year implementation plan for corridor partners.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Implementation plan for work with corridor partners (including Gap analysis)	6/15/14
2. Designs with working drawings for 4 recreational facilities (such as campsites and accesses as chosen through citizen engagement activities)	6/30/15

Activity 2: *Minnesota River Companion Guide Booklet*

Budget: \$69,300

Provide MN River Valley visitors and residents with a one stop guide containing information on where to find water trails, boat landings, canoe campsites, bicycle and pedestrian trails, major landmarks, user services, historical sites, parks, and other natural areas and points of interest (Patterned after the “Mississippi River Companion”). An electronic version will be easily available and user friendly.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Companion Guide Booklets	6/30/15

Activity 3: Invasive Species Actions for Corridor

Budget: \$154,700

Aggressively provide invasive species education and an outreach/coordination plan with corridor partners, including advanced planning for major invasive species actions, engaging citizens for invasive species monitoring and control, purchasing and installing equipment and signage to reduce the spread of invasives.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Invasive Species Education and Outreach/coordination Plan	12/30/13
2. Invasive Species inventory and control Training/event for Citizen scientists	6/30/14
3. Purchase and installation of equipment and signage	6/30/15

Activity 4: Protection of high quality habitat and critical natural resources **Budget:** \$1,218,800
Protect up to 220 acres of key habitat or recreational resource land in the river corridor and/or hydrologically significant lands in the upper watershed. Lands ultimately will be owned by state, county or through private landowner easements.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Protect up to 220 acres	06/30/15
2. Development activities initiated to provide safe access	06/30/15

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Project Coordination Team (contributing in-kind): DNR Southern Region Planner, DNR Southern Region Parks and Trails Strategic Program Manager, DNR Southern Region Regional Director

B. Timeline Requirements

CCM contracts run February through December. Follow-up activities for this project will keep CCM positions constructively employed through December 2015. Development activities on acquisitions will require a full field season through mid-November 2015.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

The upper Minnesota (MN) River has long been recognized for its ecological, recreational and scenic values. The river received MN water trail designation in 1963 and MN Wild and Scenic River status in 1977. In 2010, two documents – “Conservation in the Middle Minnesota Valley: A Blueprint and Action Plan” and “Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan 2010: A Habitat Plan” – identified strategies, regionally and statewide, which will be employed in the project area. This proposal is also a component of a new effort to establish a National Blueway on the upper 185 miles of the Minnesota River (approximately New Ulm to Ortonville). Initial national recognition for this project was received fall 2011 through the AGO Initiative. An AGO 12-month workplan was submitted in partnership with the USFWS January 2012 (this will help focus existing federal funds in the project area). It is anticipated there will be additional funds needed from a variety of sources to complete the recommended actions for the above work/ action plans and eventual Blueway designation. Future investments include additional permanent land protection in key areas to provide contiguous habitat/recreational corridors and water quality improvements; increase and upgrade of recreational infrastructure; and trail development. DNR and corridor partners will continue working together to insure a coordinated approach towards a common vision and increased stewardship of the unique resources in the valley.

2012-2013 Proposed Acquisition List

Project Title: America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Minnesota River Corridor Enhancement

Project Manager Name: Catherine Fouchi

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund \$ Request: \$1,677,900

#	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	Proposed MN River Trail (Tract 6)	Fee Title	Renville	Pairie Conservtion Core Area - Prairie Plan 2010	174	.78 miles	DNR
2	Proposed AMA (Tract 7)	Fee Title	Renville	Pairie Conservtion Core Area - Prairie Plan 2010	35	.32 miles	DNR
3	Proposed SNA (Tract 8)	Fee Title	Redwood	Pairie Conservtion Core Area - Prairie Plan 2010	20	.21 miles	DNR
4	Proposed SNA (Tract 9)	Fee Title	Redwood	Pairie Conservtion Core Area - Prairie Plan 2010	47	.53 miles	DNR
5	Proposed MN River Trail (Tract 10)	Fee Title	Redwood	Pairie Conservtion Core Area - Prairie Plan 2010	22	0	DNR

NOTES: This is a list of potential parcels available for sale. Additional lands within 10 miles of the Minnesota River between Fort Ridgley State park and Montevideo may be added to this list.

2012-2013 Detailed Project Budget

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET [3] years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel: N/A	\$ -
Contracts:	\$ -
Land Acquisition - Protect 220 acres critical natural and recreational lands	\$ 40,000
Conservation Corps Minnesota - provide two Interns	\$ 160,000
Citizen Engagement Group - conduct citizen input meetings and produce report	\$ 60,000
Recreation Design Team - provide designs for 4 recreational facilities	\$ 80,000
Recreation Guide Creator - provides maps and text for guide, design and print	\$ 65,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	\$ -
Invasive species materials - boot brush kiosks, educational kiosks, printing, signage	\$ 50,000
Monitoring Training and Workshops Supplies	\$ 10,000
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):	
Up to 220 acres will be permanently protected and will be owned in fee title or easement by DNR	\$ 1,100,000
Travel:	
Travel costs for DNR project coordinators	\$ 5,000
Additional Budget Items:	
Direct Support Services - DNR used a rate of 6.5% to calculate costs for direct support services, which are DNR's direct and necessary business services required to support this	\$ 107,900
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 1,677,900

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:	\$ -	
FWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife funding (America's Great Outdoors project)	\$ 40,000	<i>Secured</i>
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grazing grant	\$ 250,000	<i>Pending</i>
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: N/A	\$ -	
LAWCON	\$ 200,000	<i>Secured</i>
Green Corridor funds for acquisition through LSOH	\$ 1,000,000	<i>Secured</i>
In-kind Services During Project Period:	\$ -	
Project Coordinator and intern supervisor	\$ 60,000	
DNR personnel coordinating in the field with Contractors, supervising intern	\$ 60,000	
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): N/A	\$ -	
Funding History: Indicate funding secured prior to July 1, 2013, for activities directly relevant to this specific funding request. State specific source(s) of funds.	\$ -	

America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Minnesota River Corridor Enhancement Proposed DNR Acquisition

Tracts 1 - 5, not shown, include existing Whispering Ridge AMA and parcels being purchased with other funding sources

← 15 miles to Granite Falls

Proposed SNA - Tract 8
20 ac, .21 mi shoreline

Proposed SNA - Tract 9
47 ac, .53 mi shoreline

Proposed MN River Trail - Tract 10
22 ac, 0 mi shoreline

Renville

Proposed AMA - Tract 7
35 ac, .32 mi shoreline

Proposed MN River Trail - Tract 6
174 ac, .78 mi shoreline

Whispering Ridge AMA
180 ac

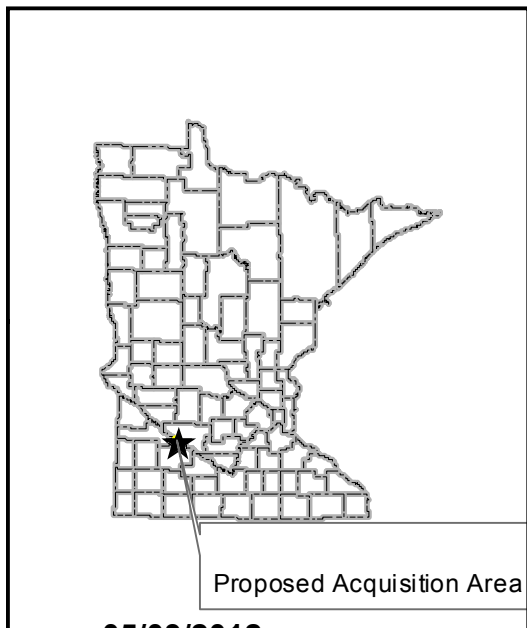
Redwood

Cedar Rock WMA
909 ac

0 0.45 0.9 1.8 Miles

4 miles to Redwood Falls

Delphi



05/03/2012

Map produced by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Southern Region
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Project Manager: Catherine Fouchi

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Project Manager Qualifications

Catherine Fouchi is the DNR Southern Region Planner and has worked with DNR in a variety of positions since 1984. As regional planner she has coordinated the development of regional management team work plans, directed a citizen input process as part of a state recreation area plan she compiled and facilitated numerous internal DNR and external partner group sessions to address issues concerning the Minnesota River Valley. Additional experience includes activities in the Greater Blue Earth River Watershed between 1996 and 2005. In this capacity she coordinated internal DNR personnel actions and worked closely with local governmental units and non-profit organizations on watershed related activities including numerous educational events to raise citizen awareness and action. Prior to this, as Minnesota's Roadsides for Wildlife Program coordinator she managed a 1995 LCMR grant for roadside habitat improvement. Catherine's early career expertise is in forest and prairie management for wildlife.

Organization Description

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' overall mission is to work with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life.

