

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2015 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 129-F**

Shoreland Protection for the Lower St. Croix River

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**Category:** F. Methods to Protect, Restore, and Enhance Land, Water, and Habitat

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**Total Project Budget:** \$ 190,300

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 3 years, July 2015 - June 2018

**Summary:**

Shoreland Protection for the Lower St. Croix River will help landowners, local governments, and realtors/developers do their part to protect Minnesota's nationally-designated river's clean water and Wild and Scenic character.

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**Name:** Debra Ryun

**Sponsoring Organization:** St. Croix River Association

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St. Croix Falls WI 54024

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**Web Address** www.stcroixriverassociation.org

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**Location**

**Region:** Metro

**County Name:** Chisago, Washington

**City / Township:**

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**Alternate Text for Visual:**

Targeted area is the Lower St. Croix Wild and Scenic River adjacent land, 52 miles long by 1/4 mile wide

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



**PROJECT TITLE:** Shoreland Protection for the Lower St. Croix River

**I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

In 1972 the lower St. Croix River became one of the few national wild and scenic rivers. Minnesota adopted zoning standards for a strip of land along the St. Croix River’s shores about 1000’ deep. Local governments administer the zoning rules designed to preserve the wild and scenic character. Development pressure has been constant. Overtime the desire to live in significantly larger homes, and an insufficient understanding of the unique protection status, has led to conflicts and weakening of adherence to established rules designed to protect bluffs and shoreland. This buffer is in decline and action is needed now to ensure its integrity.

The Lower St. Croix Wild and Scenic River (LSCWSR) is federally designated and state managed; it is about 52 miles long, and ¼ mile wide, and will be the focus of this project. This heavily visited National Park is a high quality fishery, offers spectacular natural views and has high recreational value. The overarching goal is to protect, improve and restore natural vegetation adjacent to the St. Croix River, to protect water quality, provide wildlife habitat and retain the magnificent views from this nationally designated, wild and scenic river.

By accepting shared River management responsibility, stakeholders will improve shoreland protection, and increase natural landscape along the LSCWSR. The newly created LSCWSR protection team will guide the process for local government officials to improve and uphold river friendly ordinances. Realtors will have the training to ensure new homeowners are well aware of the restrictions with homes along the Riverway. By adhering to the ordinances, citizens will be the first line of defense for this thin ribbon of protection. This project is designed to defend the buffer, if preserved will continue to protect water quality, provide habitat for birds, fish, and wildlife, and maintain a relatively unspoiled view for the millions of visitors drawn to the Riverway.

**II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

**Activity 1: Landowner Land and Water Protection**

**Budget: \$76,120**

Landowners will be recruited to be part of the LSCWSR protection team. Homeowners will learn why it’s important to maintain the natural vegetation, keep the impervious surface to a minimum, and maintain the integrity of bluffland.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Landowners are part of the LSCWSR protection team	12/31/2015
All landowners will receive shoreland protection obligations and significance information	12/31/2016
At least four landowner training session will provide habitat improvement techniques	12/31/2017
A minimum of 10 landowners will do protection or restoration work	4/30/2018
At least 50% of landowners with easements directly contacted & aware of their obligations	4/30/3018

**Activity 2: Local Unit of Government (LUGs) Land and Water Protection**

**Budget: \$66,605**

This activity will work to increase knowledge of wild and scenic values and create more consistency of zoning ordinances amongst communities in the LSCWSR. Newly created training for elected officials will focus on upholding the ordinances they have created.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
LUGs are part of the LSCWSR protection team	12/31/2015
The training series to teach shoreland protection obligations and significance is created	12/31/2016
LUGs review current ordinances to ensure they are adequate and consistent with Riverway law and values	1/31/2018
LUGs uphold their ordinances approve only the variances that have minimal impact and meet the intent of Riverway standards	4/30/2018



**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)**

**2015 Main Proposal**

**Project Title:** Shoreland Protection for the Lower St. Croix River

**Activity 3:** Realtor and Developer Land and Water Protection

**Budget:** \$47,575

Enlist the cooperation of realtors and developers in the overall project, and provide the knowledge and skills for these professionals to work with their clients to build awareness of the obligations to protect the shoreland and natural habitat on land adjacent to the LSCWSR. The result of this activity is development and redevelopment that is done in harmony with the wild and scenic Riverway values.

Outcome	Completion Date
Realtors & developers are part of the LSCWSR protection team	12/31/2015
The training series to teach shoreland protection obligations and significance is created	8/31/2017
A strategy for recruiting other realtors/developers is established and implemented	12/31/2017
At least a set of two realtor & developer training session	4/30/2018

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

SCRA will hire a land protection steward to coordinate and manage this project, and develop the team to complete the work strategies and long term goals. No other partner requests funds from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources area hydrologist (currently Molly Shodeen) and the land use section (currently Jennifer Shillcox) and the National Park Service lands and law enforcement staff, currently Laura Hojem & Mat Jacobsen, will provide technical support. They are key partners on the project design team. Other partners already identified include Lee Sather with the Baglio Real Estate Group, and Bill Palmquist, city council member and landowner in Afton, MN.

**Project Partner Receiving Funds**

- St. Croix River Association, project management & coordination, long-term program implementation

**Project Partner Not Receiving Funds**

(All will provide technical support, be part of the LSCWSR protection team, and implement strategies)

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Baglio Real Estate Group
- Local Units of Government
- National Park Service at the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
- Homeowners in the 52 by ¼ mile protected zone, constituting the LSCWSR

**B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy**

In the long term, this shoreland protection program will protect, improve and restore natural vegetation adjacent to the St. Croix River, to protect water quality, provide wildlife habitat and retain the magnificent views from this nationally designated, wild and scenic river. We will create a citizen team that is the first line of defense for the St. Croix River, committed to the long-term protection of the LSCWSR. Once the program is established, we will work with other government and non-government organizations that can provide financial and technical support to landowners for permanent land protection, and habitat restoration services. This project has potential to be highly visible to the public, and if successful it could be duplicated along any waterway.

**C. Timeline Requirements**

Creating the project team, designing the outreach strategies, and providing the first set of training is expected to take three years. Once the project team and strategies are in place, implementation will become an ongoing program within SCRA. We will continue to facilitate the LSCWSR protection team as needed and continue to promote adaption of land protection measures.

## 2015 Detailed Project Budget

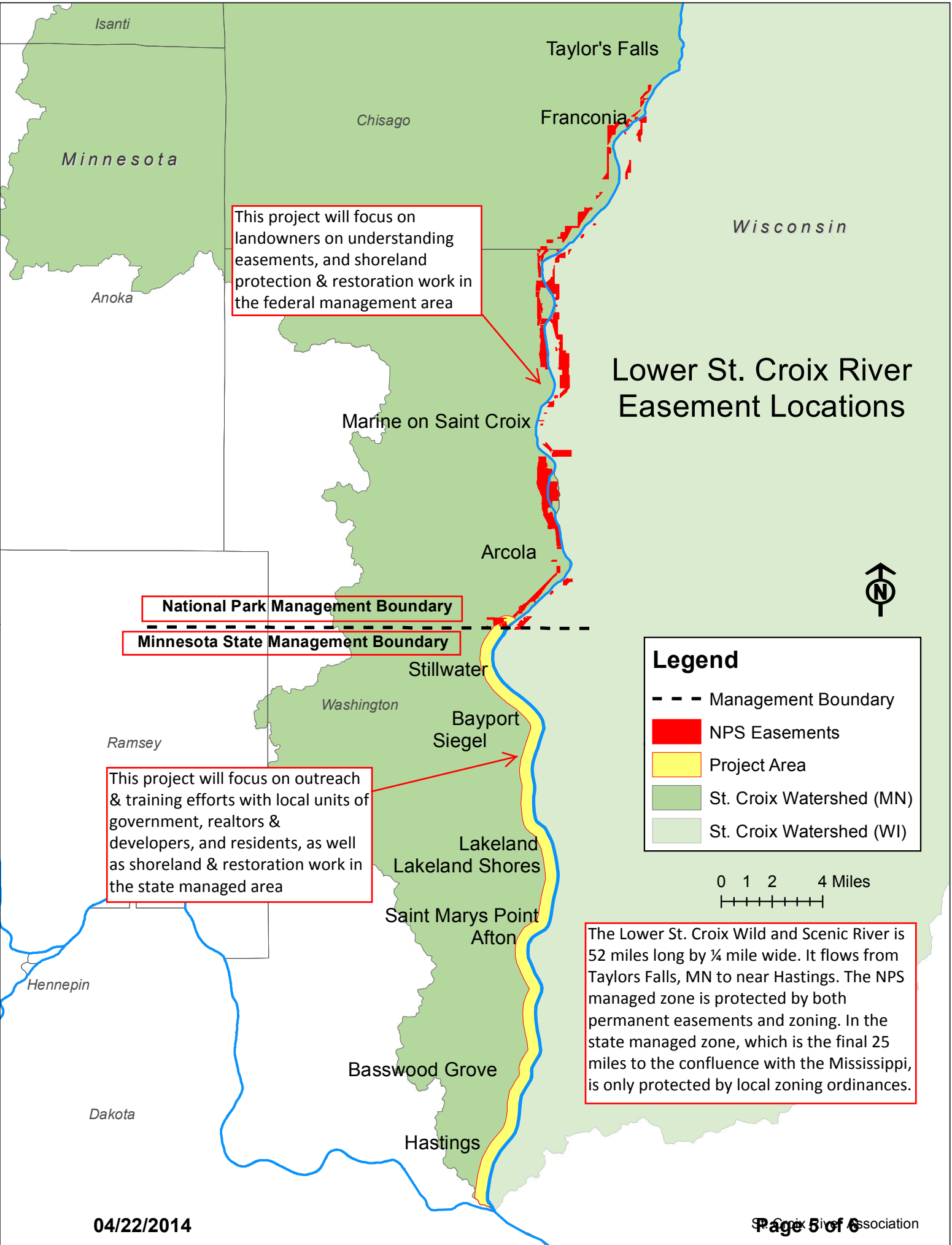
**Project Title:** Shoreland Protection for the Lower St. Croix River

### IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 3 years

	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<b>Personnel: New Hire, Project Manager (75% Salary, 25% Benefits), 1 FTE for three years</b>	\$ 187,500
<b>Contracts:</b>	N/A
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> promotional materials such as signs, brochures, educational materials, printing	
<b>Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):</b>	N/A
<b>Travel:</b> mileage (5000 miles), data gathering, meet with partners, implement training sessions, landowner outreach, easement	\$ 2,800
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b>	N/A
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =</b>	<b>\$ 190,300</b>

### V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
<b>Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b> SCRA will commit administrative and general office support, provide interns to help with outreach for landowners with easements,	\$ 40,000	secured
<b>Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b>	N/A	
<b>In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b>	N/A	
<b>Funding History:</b> \$120,000 - ENRTF ML 2011 "St. Croix Basin Protection: Coordinated, Innovative, Targeted"	\$ 120,000	
<b>Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation:</b> SCRA is in the final implementing phase, and plan to expend the full appropriation and complete all objectives	\$ 63,177	<i>unspent</i>



This project will focus on landowners on understanding easements, and shoreland protection & restoration work in the federal management area

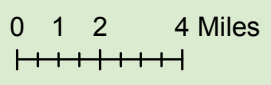
**National Park Management Boundary**  
**Minnesota State Management Boundary**

This project will focus on outreach & training efforts with local units of government, realtors & developers, and residents, as well as shoreland & restoration work in the state managed area

# Lower St. Croix River Easement Locations

**Legend**

- - - Management Boundary
- NPS Easements
- Project Area
- St. Croix Watershed (MN)
- St. Croix Watershed (WI)



The Lower St. Croix Wild and Scenic River is 52 miles long by ¼ mile wide. It flows from Taylors Falls, MN to near Hastings. The NPS managed zone is protected by both permanent easements and zoning. In the state managed zone, which is the final 25 miles to the confluence with the Mississippi, is only protected by local zoning ordinances.

## **Shoreland Protection for the Lower St. Croix River**

### **Project Manager Qualifications**

Deb Ryun, Executive Director of the St. Croix River Association (SCRA) since October 2009, will provide project management. In this role she will provide oversight of the project as a whole and manage the Land Protection Steward who will be hired to staff the effort. Extensive past experience and her work to date at SCRA have provided Ryun with key skills needed for this project, including: management and coordination of multi-stakeholder initiatives; watershed-level planning; and implementation of on-the-ground projects to protect land and water. SCRA is nearing completion on their 2011 LCCMR project, *St. Croix Basin Protection: Coordinated, Innovative, Targeted*. Prior to joining SCRA, Ryun served as Executive Director for Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI), a non-profit organization working to conserve and enhance soil and water resources on private working lands.

These partners have expressed commitment to participate in this program, and have the relationships, desire and experience to effectively orchestrate resources and provide support to carry out this project. The project will benefit from the expertise of many partners including but not limited to:

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources hydrologist, currently Molly Shodeen. The DNR has 30 plus years of working with city planning and zoning officials along the St. Croix River striving to ensure compliance with the wild and scenic rivers act. Additionally, the Land Use Section will provide technical support, currently supervised by Jennifer Shillcox.
- Lee Sather with the Baglio Real Estate Group, the realtor that has agreed to be the main contact representing his realty group. He works with a team of professionals very interested in creating a program that will help buyers understand that when they purchase a property along the St. Croix River, they are buying and investment in a national treasure. Along with the views comes the responsibility to maintain that health and well-being of the Riverway.
- Bill Palmquist, city council member in Afton, MN. Bill understands the need for consistency in creating and upholding ordinances to protect the Riverway shoreland natural landscape and ultimately the health of the St. Croix. He has extensive experience working with city government.
- National Park Service lands and law enforcement staff at the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, currently Laura Hojem and Mat Jacobsen have decades long experience with land protection, and working with landowners along the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.
- Other partners will be engaged as this program develops.

### **Organization Description**

The mission of the SCRA is to protect, restore and celebrate the St. Croix River and its watershed. Founded in 1911, SCRA began a significant transformation in 2008, moving from a volunteer organization to a more active leader with the appropriate vision, governance and resources. This transformation was stimulated by a widely-acknowledged need for an organization focused specifically on protecting and improving the St. Croix River and its basin.

SCRA works closely with the National Park Service, nonprofits and state and local governments. We also support and collaborate with existing partnerships, including the St. Croix Conservation Collaborative, a working group initiated by SCRA in 2005 to increase collaboration among groups working on land protection in the basin; and the St. Croix Basin Water Resources Planning team (Basin Team), which was formed in 1993 by the agencies overseeing the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway and has led water quality research and established a basin-wide goal of reducing phosphorous pollution to the river by 20 percent. SCRA recently completed a project in partnership with the St. Croix Basin Team in which we leveraged \$500,000 in Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment funds for water quality testing and implementation work on the St. Croix, to a project total investment of \$ \$1,035,592. These existing partners will be called upon as appropriate to work on this project through SCRA's coordination.

SCRA is committed to applying the systems developed through this project over the long-term.