

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

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 141-G

MeCC VIII: Priority Expansion Minnesota Valley NWRefuge

Category: G. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Total Project Budget: \$ 500,000

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

Summary:

The Minnesota Valley Trust will protect through fee title acquisition 100 acres of priority habitat for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, providing multiple ecologic and hydrologic benefits.

Name: Deborah Loon

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

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Minneapolis Minn 55401

Telephone Number: (612) 801-1935

Email dLoon@mnvalleytrust.org

Web Address www.mnvalleytrust.org

Location

Region: Metro

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

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

Map depicts the boundaries of the MN Valley Refuge, lands currently under management and priority lands yet to be acquired

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



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2015 Main Proposal

Project Title: Priority Expansion of the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge, MeCC VIII

PROJECT TITLE: Priority Expansion of the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge, MeCC VIII - Ecological Landscapes

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Minnesota Valley Trust (MVT) will protect through fee title acquisition 100 acres of priority habitat for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), as delineated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in its Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Refuge. MVT also will protect through fee title acquisition an additional 100 acres for the Refuge with other non-state funds, for a total of 200 acres. This work will be done by MVT as a partner in the Metro Conservation Corridors Phase VIII.

The Refuge units and lands to be acquired have been delineated and prioritized by the USFWS through a public planning process. The lands are primarily along the Minnesota River and include river frontage, floodplain and cropland.

Fee acquisition with ENRTF and other non-state funds through this project will provide the following ecologic and hydrologic benefits:

- 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.
- Provide valuable habitat for a host of pollinators. Croplands will be restored and grasslands enhanced with a myriad of native forb and pollen species, providing diverse pollen and nectar sources for more than 50 species of bees, moths, and butterflies.
- Provide valuable wetland, prairie and floodplain forest habitat for up to 19 state-listed threatened and endangered 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 very near the Twin Cities metropolitan area for wildlife-dependent recreational activities, such as birding, photography, hiking, wildlife observation and interpretation, conservation education, hunting and fishing.

This project will leverage other non-state funds available for Refuge expansion and build upon the ENRTF investment through prior phases of Metropolitan Conservation Corridors.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge **Budget:** \$ 500,000

At least 100 acres of priority lands will be acquired in fee title with the ENRTF grant for one or more of the following delineated units of the Refuge – Blakely Unit (Scott & LeSueur Counties), Jessenland Unit (Sibley and Le Sueur Counties), Louisville Swamp Unit (Scott County), St. Lawrence Unit (Scott County), San Francisco Unit (Carver County) and Upgrala Unit (Hennepin County). The MVT works with landowners within those delineated units who are interested in selling their land for inclusion in the Refuge. The local units of government in these identified areas are aware and supportive of the work to complete the Refuge within its authorized boundaries.



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2015 Main Proposal

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An additional 100 acres will be acquired for the Refuge by the Trust using other non-state funds. The MVT and USFWS will develop a restoration, enhancement and management plan, then restore and enhance the floodplain forest, wetlands and prairie. Cropland will be retired and drain tile broken, as applicable. This restoration, enhancement and management work will be completed with other funds.

Following restoration and enhancement, 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.

The ENRTF grant funds will be used for the fee title acquisition only; all acquisition-related costs, including professional fees, and costs related to restoration, enhancement and management will be paid by other funds.

| Outcome | Completion Date |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. Fee title acquisition of 100 acres for Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge | Three years -- June 30, 2018 |

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. will manage and complete this project. MVT will work in close coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in selecting the parcel(s) to acquire, conducting environmental reviews, and developing restoration and management plans. The MN Valley Trust is part of the Metropolitan Conservation Corridors Partnership. Additional partners will include applicable local units of government, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and other non-profit partners.

B. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

The fee title acquisition activities are part of a larger strategy to expand and complete the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge according to a plan developed by the USFWS (see Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Refuge). To-date, the Minnesota Valley Trust has acquired 5,076 acres for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District, of which 3,004 acres were specifically for the Refuge.

The authorized boundaries of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge today total 29,133 acres. Currently, 14,010 acres are under the Refuge’s ownership or management. Acquisition of the remaining 15,123 acres over time will complete the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. These 15,123 acres make up the search area for the Minnesota Valley Trust.

Funding for this work has and will continue to include a combination of federal, state and private sources.

C. Timeline Requirements

Activities will begin July 1, 2015 and be completed no later than June 30, 2018.

2015 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Priority Expansion of the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge, MeCC VIII

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET - 3 years

| <u>BUDGET ITEM</u> | <u>AMOUNT</u> |
|---|-------------------|
| Fee Title Acquisition Fee title acquisition of 100 acres for the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Land acquired will be donated to the US Fish and Wildlife Service. | \$ 500,000 |
| TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST = | \$ 500,000 |

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: Minnesota Valley Trust, Inc. or other private sources | \$ 500,000 | Secured |
| Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: <i>None</i> | \$ - | NA |
| 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. | \$ - | Secured |
| Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): MVT has completed MeCC Phases I - V Supplemental projects and HCP Phases II-VII. MVT is working on and will complete MeCC Phase VI (2011 grant) and Phase VII (2013 grant). | \$ 979,500 | Phases VI (2011) and VII (2013) in progress. |
| Funding History: Phase I (2003) - \$290,000 ETF and \$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 Phase V Supplemental (2010) - \$325,000 ETF and \$309,452 other non-state funds Phase VI (2011) - \$600,000 and \$550,000 other non-state funds Phase VII (2013) - \$400,000 and \$200,000 other non-state funds TOTALS: \$2,505,000 ETF and at least \$3,350,501 other non-state funds | \$ 2,505,000 | Phases I - V & V Supplemental Complete; Phase VI and VII in progress |

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2015 Proposed Acquisition/Restoration List**

Project Title: Priority Expansion of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, MeCC VIII
Project Manager Name: Deborah Loon, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.
ENRTF \$ Request: \$500,000

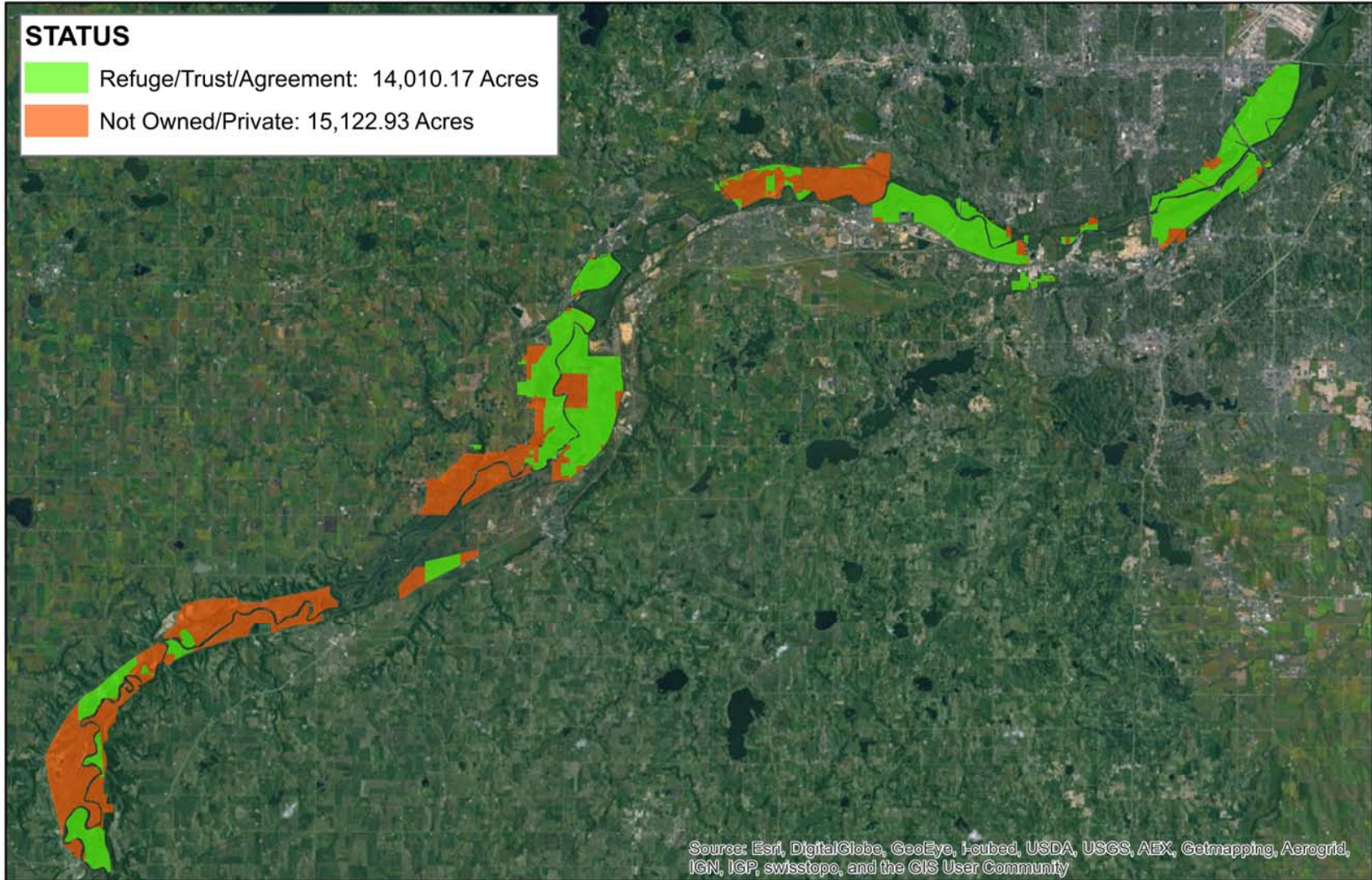
| # | Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name | Geographic Coordinates Format: [Deg.]° [Min.]' [Sec.]" [Hemis.] | | County | Estimated Cost | Ecological Significance | Activity Description | # of Acres | # of Shoreline Miles | Type of Landowner | Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable) |
|---|--|--|------------|----------|----------------|--|-----------------------|------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|
| | | Latitude | Longitude | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Blakely Unit Expansion, MVNWR | 44°34'40"N | 93°52'29"W | Scott | \$ 500,000 | Floodplain forest, wetland and prairie | Fee Title Acquisition | 100 | TBD | private / trust | See note 2 |
| 2 | Jessenland Unit Expansion, MVNWR | 44°34'28"N | 93°54'20"W | Sibley | \$ 500,000 | Floodplain forest, wetland and prairie | Fee Title Acquisition | 100 | TBD | private / trust | See note 2 |
| | Louisville Swamp Unit Expansion, MVNWR | 44°43'32"N | 93°37'08"W | Scott | \$ 500,000 | Floodplain Forest, oak savanna, wetland, and prairie | Fee Title Acquisition | 100 | TBD | private / trust | See note 2 |
| 3 | St. Lawrence Unit Expansion, MVNWR | 44°39'01"N | 93°42'13"W | Scott | \$ 500,000 | Wetland and prairie | Fee Title Acquisition | 100 | 0 | private / trust | See note 2 |
| 4 | San Francisco Unit Expansion, MVNWR | 44°41'34"N | 93°40'50"W | Carver | \$ 500,000 | Floodplain forest, wetland and prairie | Fee Title Acquisition | 100 | TBD | private / trust | See note 2 |
| 4 | Upgrala Unit Expansion, MVNWR | 44°48'40"N | 93°28'56"W | Hennepin | \$ 500,000 | Floodplain forest, wetland and prairie | Fee Title Acquisition | 100 | TBD | private / trust | See note 2 |

NOTES: (1) Parcel search areas are within the Refuge 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. (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.

R 7 W R 6 W

STATUS

- Refuge/Trust/Agreement: 14,010.17 Acres
- Not Owned/Private: 15,122.93 Acres



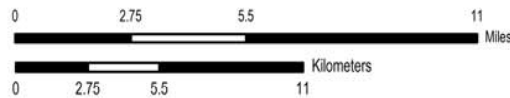
T 9 N
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Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, I-cubed, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

R 7 W R 6 W

PRODUCED BY MINNESOTA VALLEY NWR
BLOOMINGTON, MINNESOTA
MAP DATE: 03/26/2014
Ownership Status Year 2012



UTM ZONE 15
NAD 83



PROJECT MANAGER QUALIFICATIONS

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.

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

- Acquire priority lands for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District (Refuge) according to the USFWS Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Refuge.
- Complete habitat restoration, enhancement and management of lands acquired, following plans developed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (work is ongoing).
- Support the operation of the Rapids Lake Environmental Education and Visitor Center (constructed by the Trust in fall 2007 on the Rapids Lake Unit near Carver and Jordan).
- Construct visitor access, education and interpretive facilities on the Minnesota Valley Refuge, including trails and parking lots (work is ongoing).
- Support the Refuge in facilitating school visits and other education, outreach and engagement opportunities with urban audiences.

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. The “Mitigation Plan” was completed by the Trust in 2012 and a new Strategic Plan adopted in early 2013. The new plan sets strategic objectives and calls for the Trust to continue forward with the above enumerated activities.

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.

