

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

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**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 149-G**

Enhanced Access to Isolated State Lands

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**Category:** G. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

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**Total Project Budget:** \$ 1,017,397

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

**Summary:**

Enhancement of natural resources, habitat, ecological and/or recreational values associated with isolated state lands through strategic acquisition of adjacent land or easements.

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**Name:** Susan Damon

**Sponsoring Organization:** MN DNR

**Address:** 500 Lafayette Rd  
St. Paul MN 55155

**Telephone Number:** (651) 259-5961

**Email** susan.damon@state.mn.us

**Web Address** www.dnr.state.mn.us

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**Location**

**Region:** Statewide

**County Name:** Statewide

**City / Township:**

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**Alternate Text for Visual:**

The attached State of Minnesota map shows the locations of state lands with limited access surrounded by private land. The map shows that there are such isolated parcels in most Minnesota counties and in all four ecological provinces of the state.

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



**PROJECT TITLE: Enhanced Access to Isolated State Lands**

**I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

This project is for the purpose of improving the conservation and recreation benefits of isolated state lands by enhancing access and connectivity through acquisition of adjacent land or easements.

The Minnesota DNR manages over 5.5 million acres of state-owned land. While most of this land is managed in large contiguous blocks of state ownership, some DNR-administered land consists of smaller isolated parcels. These parcels may have limited or no public access and are difficult to manage for natural resource values inherent in larger contiguous blocks of public land ownership. A recent DNR GIS analysis identified 1,005 parcels of state land, comprised of about 43,000 acres, which are completely surrounded by private and/or tribal land.

The goal of this project is to enhance the natural resources, habitat, ecological and/or recreational values associated with isolated state lands through strategic acquisitions of land or easements from willing adjacent landowners.

This project consists of four major components. First, project staff will analyze isolated parcels of state land, focusing primarily on the aforementioned 1,005 parcels, to identify the natural resources, habitat, ecological and/or recreational values associated with the specific parcels as well as the conservation/recreation benefits that would accrue if such parcels were part of a larger contiguous block of state land or if public and/or management access were acquired. Second, in collaboration with the DNR’s Strategic Land Asset Management Integration Team and administering divisions, project staff will prioritize the isolated state parcels for acquisition of land or easements from adjacent landowners. Third, based on the acquisition priorities, the DNR will acquire land or easements from willing sellers. Finally, project staff will work with administering divisions to develop restoration/enhancement or management plans for the acquired sites.

**II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

**Activity 1: Analyze isolated parcels; develop acquisition priorities.**

**Budget: \$103,116**

Project staff will conduct an analysis of isolated state parcels: (1) to determine the parcels’ natural resources, habitat, ecological and recreational values; (2) to determine the existence and quality of any legal or permissive access to the sites; (3) to determine whether and how the parcels’ natural resources, habitat, ecological and recreational values could be enhanced through protection of adjacent land or acquisition of easements for public and/or management access; and (4) to evaluate how acquisition of adjacent land or easements would relate to existing conservation plans. Project staff will use GIS tools and a variety of resources (e.g., Minnesota biological survey data, existing conservation plans, DNR land records) to perform the analysis. Using the results of the analysis, project staff, in collaboration the DNR’s Strategic Land Asset Management Integration Team and administering divisions, will prioritize the isolated parcels for acquisition of adjacent lands or easements for public and/or management access based on the conservation/recreation benefits such acquisitions would provide.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Develop criteria for analysis of isolated parcels in collaboration with DNR’s Strategic Land Asset Management Integration Team	October 2015
2. Conduct analysis of parcels	March 2016
3. Prioritize parcels for acquisition of adjacent lands/easements	June 2016



**Activity 2: Acquire land or easements; develop restoration/enhancement or management plans.**

**Budget: \$914,281**

Using existing DNR GIS tools and in collaboration with regional and area DNR staff, project staff will initially identify the owners of parcels targeted for acquisition under the analysis in Activity 1. These landowners will be contacted to determine whether they are willing to sell land or easements to the DNR. Once willing sellers have been identified, targeted lands will be evaluated through field review and acquisition priorities will be adjusted accordingly. DNR will work with willing sellers to acquire land or easements. Once purchase agreements with willing sellers have been secured, project staff, in collaboration with staff of the division that will administer the acquired land or easements, will develop restoration/enhancement or management plans for the sites.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Identify owners of parcels targeted for acquisition	July 2016
2. Contact landowners to identify willing sellers	September 2016
3. Evaluate parcels through field review	June 2017
4. Adjust acquisition prioritization	June 2017
5. Acquire priority lands or easements	June 2018
6. Develop restoration/enhancement or management plans	June 2018

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

The DNR Division of Lands and Minerals will hire an unclassified project consultant senior to staff the project. The project consultant senior will be responsible for overall project coordination, the analysis under Activity 1 and components of Activity 2 other than the real estate transactions. DNR realty staff will conduct the real estate transactions to acquire targeted lands and easements. The DNR Strategic Land Asset Management Integration Team, comprised of representatives from the DNR Divisions of Ecological and Water Resources, Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, Lands and Minerals and Parks and Trails, will provide overall direction to the project and determine acquisition priorities. Staff of divisions that administer the isolated parcels will also collaborate on some aspects of the project.

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

This project is part of the DNR’s ongoing strategic land asset management efforts. An outcome of this project will be the prioritized list of acquisitions to better access and link currently isolated parcels of state lands to larger more contiguous blocks of state ownership. This list will help to inform future acquisition funding requests from sources that may include ENRTF, OHF and bonding. Strategies for funding of enhancement/restoration and long-term management of land or easements to be acquired with project funds will be developed along with acquisition plans for specific sites.

**C. Timeline Requirements**

The project will require three years to complete. The first year of the project will be spent on Activity 1. The remaining two years will be spent on Activity 2.

## 2015 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Enhanced Access to Isolated State Lands

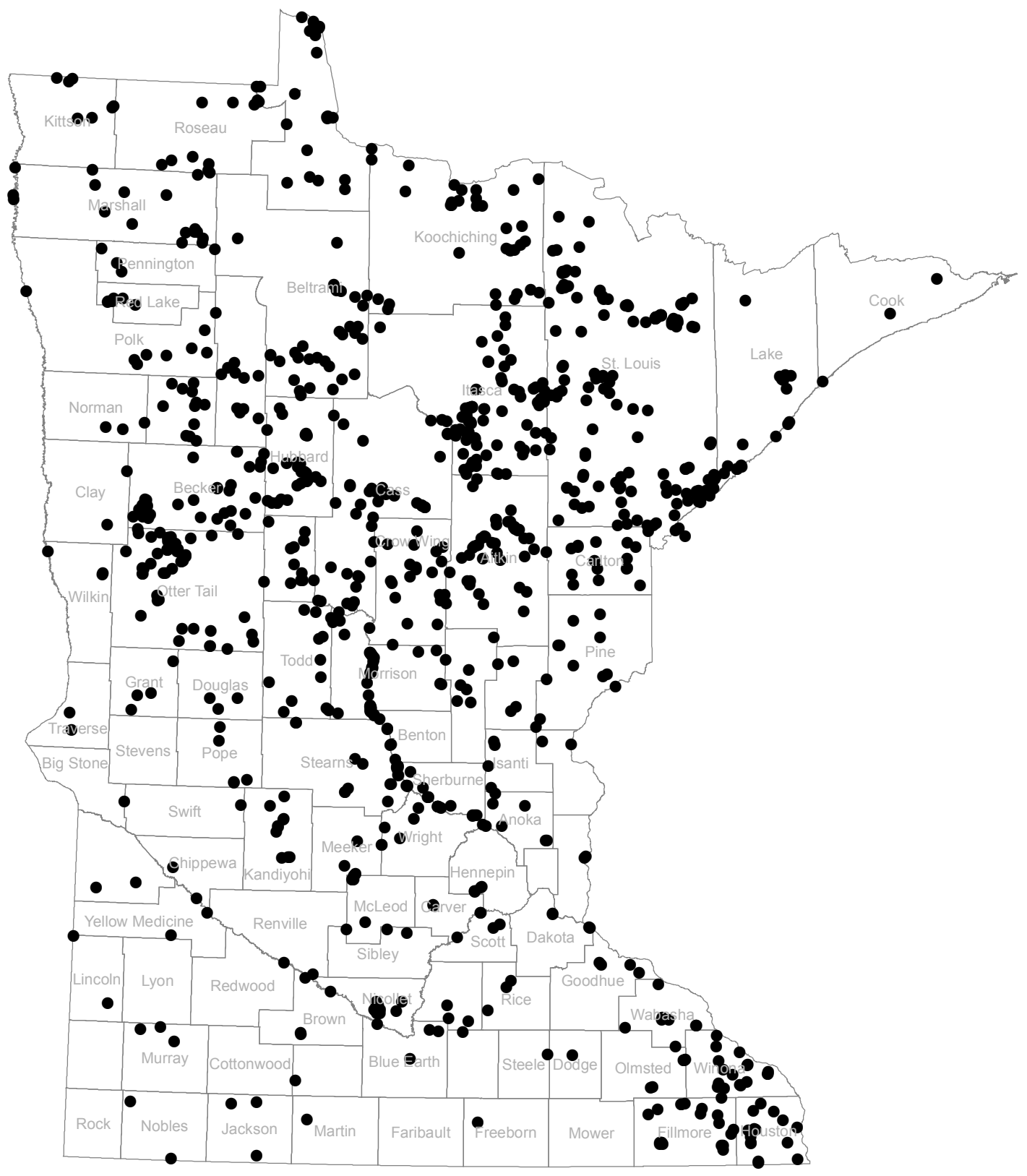
### IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 3 years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<b>Personnel:</b> One project consultant senior full time, three years (70% salary, 30% benefits)	\$ 267,000
<b>Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):</b> Number of acres unknown. The State of Minnesota will hold title to fee acquisitions and will be the holder of any easements acquired. <i>Budget amount includes transaction costs.</i>	\$ 728,000
<b>Travel:</b> In state travel (DNR fleet charges, mileage, lodging and meals as per state contracts)	\$ 5,000
<b>Direct support services:</b> DNR's direct and necessary costs pay for activities that are directly related to and necessary for accomplishing appropriated programs/projects. In addition to itemized costs captured in our proposal budget, direct and necessary costs cover HR Support (~\$3,978), Safety Support (~\$984), Financial Support (~\$3,536), Communication Support (~\$1,141), IT Support (~\$6,819), Planning Support (~\$704), Procurement Support (~\$235), and division and regional program management (~\$0) that are necessary to accomplishing funded programs/projects.	\$ 17,397
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =</b>	<b>\$ 1,017,397</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>	\$ -	N/A
<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> Project management, Strategic Land Asset Management Integration Team and administering division staff time to collaborate with project staff	Unknown	Pending
<b>Funding History:</b>	\$ -	N/A
<b>Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation:</b>	\$ -	N/A

# DNR land with limited access surrounded by private land



## Mike Banker

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**From:** Damon, Susan (DNR) <Susan.Damon@state.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 17, 2014 12:51 PM  
**To:** Mike Banker  
**Cc:** Dirnberger, Amanda (DNR); Lewis, Kathy A (DNR); Richards, Jess (DNR)  
**Subject:** RE: LCCMR Proposal Submission

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your follow-up e-mail. You have requested that I submit a proposed acquisition/restoration list for the 2015 Enhanced Access to Isolated State Lands Proposal. Because of the nature of this proposed project, a proposed acquisition/restoration list is not available at this time.

The proposed project consists of two phases over a three-year period. The first phase (Activity 1), which would be completed in June 2016, involves analysis of isolated state parcels to determine where the greatest conservation/recreation benefits would accrue if land or easements on land adjacent to the isolated state parcels were acquired. Outcome number 3 of Activity 1 is to prioritize parcels for acquisition following the analysis. This priority list would be used as the basis for a proposed acquisition/restoration list, which would be submitted to LCCMR for approval. Following approval of the acquisition/restoration list, the second phase of the project (Activity 2) would focus on land and easement acquisition.

I hope this will address your questions. Please feel free to contact me if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

Susan Damon  
Land Acquisition & Legal Services Manager  
Division of Lands & Minerals  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
651-295-5961  
[susan.damon@state.mn.us](mailto:susan.damon@state.mn.us)

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**From:** Mike Banker [<mailto:mike.banker@lccmr.leg.mn>]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 14, 2014 10:43 AM  
**To:** Damon, Susan (DNR)  
**Cc:** Susan Thornton; Michael McDonough; Diana Griffith; Dirnberger, Amanda (DNR)  
**Subject:** LCCMR Proposal Submission

Susan,

I am following up on the proposal you recently submitted to LCCMR in response to the 2015 RFP. Your proposal involves acquisition and we did not receive a "Proposed Acquisition/Restoration List". As indicated on p.8 of the RFP this is a requirement for all proposals involving land acquisition or restoration. Without this list the proposal is incomplete. If you fill out the attached document with your list of acquisitions and provide it to us by this Friday, April 18, we will accept it to complete your proposal. Let me know if you have any questions. Thank you.

Best,  
Mike

Mike Banker  
Assistant Director  
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## **Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description**

### **Project Manager Qualifications**

Susan Damon received her B.A. degree from Western Michigan University and M.A. degree from Middlebury College. She received her J.D. degree, *magna cum laude*, from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1990. She was a judicial clerk for The Honorable Thomas J. Kalitowski at the Minnesota Court of Appeals from 1990-91. Between 1991 and 2008, she was a Special Assistant and Assistant Attorney General for the State of Minnesota, representing several state agencies and licensing boards. Since 2008, Susan has been employed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Lands and Minerals. She was the project consultant and lead worker for the ENRTF-funded Conservation Easement Stewardship and Enforcement Program Plan, Phase I and managed the ENRTF-funded Conservation Easement Stewardship and Enforcement Program, Phases II and III until November 2013. Since November 2013, she has been the Land Acquisition and Legal Services Section Manager. She will graduate from the State's Emerging Leaders Institute in April 2014.

### **Organization Description**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is a state agency. The DNR's 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. The DNR consists of several divisions based on the state's natural resources, such as Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, Lands and Minerals, Parks and Trails, and Ecological and Water Resources, as well as four regions.