

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2016 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 180-G**

Wilder Forest Acquisition for Conservation, Preservation and Education

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

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**Total Project Budget:** \$ 6,320,000

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 1 year, July 2016 to June 2017

**Summary:**

MFA will purchase 539 acres of diverse, critical habitat, pristine lakes and 3.2 miles of shoreline, protecting it from development and preserving the rural heritage of Washington County for generations.

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**Name:** Hilary Otey Wold

**Sponsoring Organization:** Minnesota Food Association

**Address:** 14220-B Ostland Trail North  
Marine on St. Croix MN 55047

**Telephone Number:** (651) 433-3676

**Email** hilary@mnfoodassociation.org

**Web Address** www.mnfoodassociation.org

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**Location**

**Region:** Metro

**County Name:** Washington

**City / Township:** May Township

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**Alternate Text for Visual:**

Property lines indicated on aerial photo, mostly north of Ostland Trail between Norrell Avenue and Paul Avenue.

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



**PROJECT TITLE: Wilder Forest Acquisition for Conservation, Preservation and Education**

**I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

Minnesota Food Association (MFA) seeks funding to purchase 539 acres of unique, diverse and critical habitat, commonly known as Wilder Forest, located within May Township in Washington County. The Amherst Wilder Foundation currently owns the property and has decided to sell. Our goal is to acquire the property to protect it from development by creating a model Farm and Forest that will demonstrate sustainable farming and ecological management, advance fields of study, support policy development and provide benefits to the people of Minnesota and the surrounding region.

The property is one of the most significant tracks of land held in single ownership in the county and includes:

- Approximately 3.2 miles of shoreline including undeveloped Mays Lake and Clear Lake; plus shoreline of East Boot Lake and Square Lake. All are pristine lakes, identified as critical to regional water quality and priorities for protection.
- Over 200 acres of high-quality, undisturbed, native mesic oak forests of significant age and historical value.
- High biodiversity and habitat ranges for rare, threatened and concerned amphibian, bird and plant species, according to MN County Biological Survey.
- Over 170 acres of agricultural land and grasslands.
- Concordia Village Conference Center, including classrooms and conference space, two large commercial kitchens, and the capacity to sleep 140 people.

Both May Township and Washington County's land-use plans designate the area for conservation and preservation. This acquisition ensures the protection of this unique property. We will work with a strong network of partner organizations, experts and the community to create an Integrated Comprehensive Management and Education Plan for the entire property that includes expanding our efforts into sustainable, edible forestry agriculture, agroforestry, habitat restoration, and environmental education and research. We anticipate in the first three years following acquisition working with 100 university students, 120 farmers, 1,500 K-12 students and to be visited by 5,000 Minnesotans.

**II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

**Activity 1:** Acquire and protect from development 539 acres and 56 acres of lakes **Budget:** \$10,533,000

This unique and diverse habitat, known as Wilder Forest, located within the Carnelian Waterway, includes land listed as one of Washington County's top-10 areas for preservation and conservation.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Long-term protection of significant waterways and diverse habitats.	July 2016
2. Preservation of biologically significant areas with rare, threatened and concerned species.	July 2016

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

Project Partners Receiving Funds: NONE

Project Partners Not Receiving Funds:

- DNR
- Washington County Soil Conservation District
- Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District
- University of Minnesota
- May Township
- Gateway Trail Association



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

The project will permanently protect 539 acres from development, helping to achieve the long-term planning goals of May Township and Washington County. Aggregate resources will be left undisturbed. Historic forest, prairie and grassland will be managed for the benefit of flora and fauna. Invasive species will be removed to protect biological diversity and strengthen populations of rare, threatened and important birds, mammals and plant life. Shorelines and water resources will be maintained and nurtured to ensure the long-term health of our water supply. The rural nature and agricultural heritage of this community will be preserved and maintained for the benefit of generations to come. The area will also be a research and education center with public access and demonstration projects. All work will be achieved in accordance with Best Management Practices and the Integrated Comprehensive Management and Education Plan (ICMEP).

The unique nature of this project has enabled us to form partnerships that support the establishment and implementation of the ICMEP. Additional funds are being pursued from government and philanthropic sources to fund the development and execution of the ICMEP, which will ensure:

- The establishment of an interdisciplinary research team to study the presence of rare and concerned species, including plant, pollinators and small mammals.
- Sustainable land management, habitat enhancements, and monitoring to ensure ecological diversity.
- Public engagement through educational program development.

Public programming will be a key piece of the ICMEP development and implementation. There are numerous plans for public access and education, including:

- Installation of self-guided tour trails, including educational, demonstration, and interpretive signage concerning the landscape, watershed, and ecological significance of the land. Open to the public during daylight hours.
- Recreational access to Square Lake. Open to the public during daylight hours.
- Gateway Trail access and amenities including rest/picnic areas, horse corral, horse trails in the woods and prairie. Open to the public during daylight hours.
- Programs that use the shoreline, woods and farmlands as outdoor classrooms.
- Educational activities, courses, workshops and conferences held in meeting spaces located in Concordia Village.

### **C. Timeline Requirements**

MFA has requested financial and technical support from Washington County. Upon completion of an appraisal, MFA will negotiate a purchase agreement. Land covenants separating ownership of the land and the existing buildings shall be filed with the County Recorder Office. After acquisition is completed, the work plan will include: inventory and evaluation of resources, convening of public meetings, development of recommendations and publication of findings. Year two will focus on securing funds and initiating implementation of the plan. In year three full operation and evaluation of the ICMEP will be implemented. The Integrated Comprehensive Management and Education Plan will be monitored and updated annually.

## 2016 Detailed Project Budget

**Project Title:** Wilder Forest Acquisition For Conservation, Preservation and Education

### IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET- 1 year

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<b>Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): 538.92 Acres</b>	6,320,000
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =</b>	6,320,000

### 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> Washington County Land and Water Funds—anticipated request	\$ 4,213,000	<i>Pending</i>
<b>Other Non-State \$ to Be Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>	\$ -	<i>NA</i>
<b>Other Non-State \$ to Be Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>	\$ -	<i>NA</i>
<b>Other State \$ to Be Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>	\$ -	<i>NA</i>
<b>In-kind Services to Be Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>	\$ -	<i>NA</i>
<b>Funding History:</b>	\$ -	<i>NA</i>
<b>Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation:</b>	\$ -	<i>NA</i>

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2016 Proposed Acquisition/Restoration List**

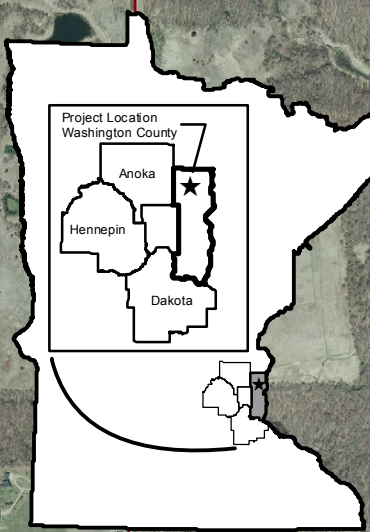
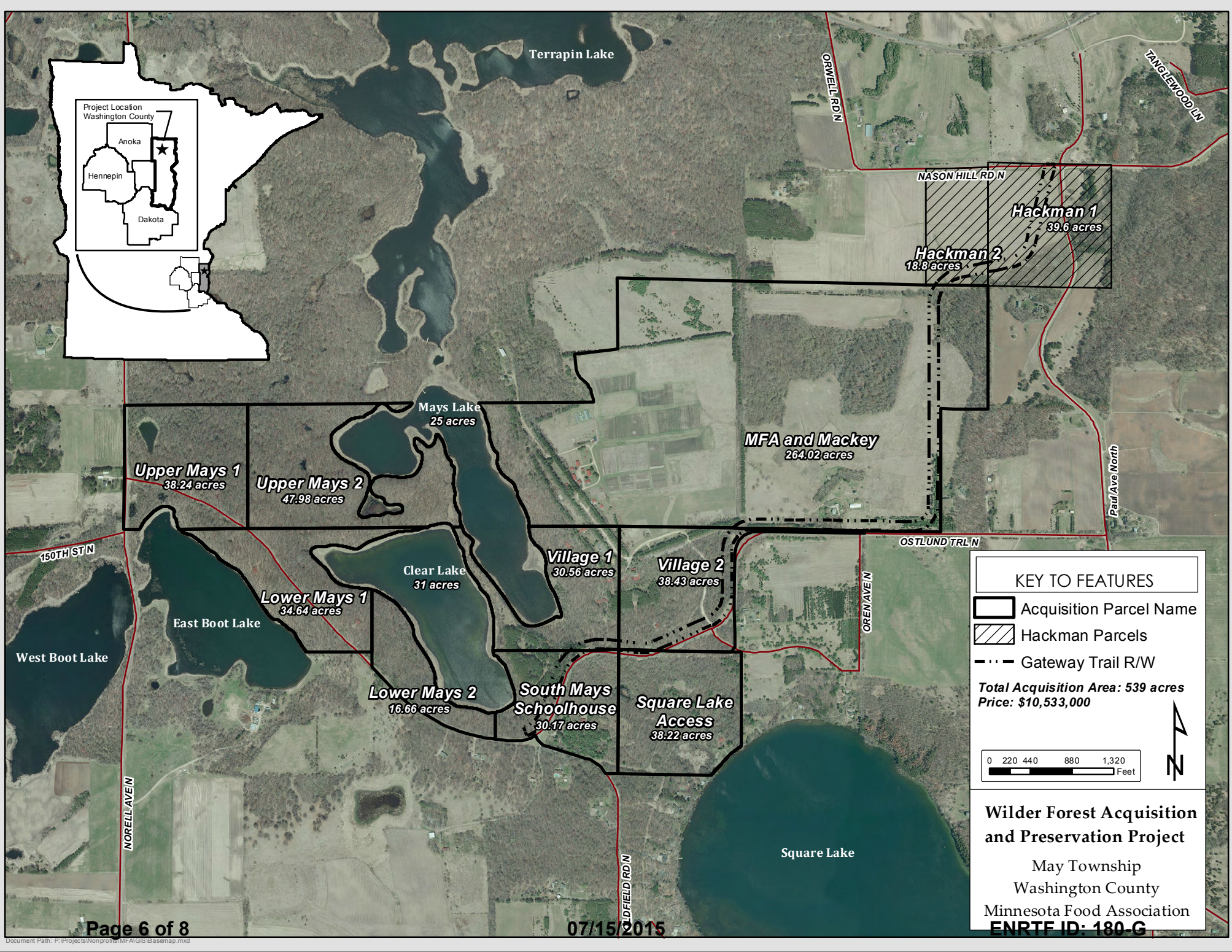
**Project Title:** Wilder Forest Acquisition for Conservation, Preservation and Education  
**Project Manager Name:** Hilary Otey Wold  
**Organization:** Minnesota Food Association  
**ENRTF \$ Request:** \$10,533,960

#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	PID Number	Geographic Coordinates Format: [Deg.]° [Min.]' [Sec.]" [Hemis.]		Estimated Cost	County	Ecological Significance	Activity Description	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)
			Latitude	Longitude								
1	MFA and Mackey	14.031.20.31.0002	45°10'16"	92°48'33"	\$ 4,636,000.00	Washington	Prairie, Forested, Cropland	Fee Title Acquisition	264.02	0.35	non-profit	MFA
2	Village 1	22.031.20.11.0001	45°9'55"	92°49'2"	\$ 1,370,000.00	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	30.56	0.53	non-profit	MFA
3	Village 2	23.031.20.22.0001	45°9'55"	92°48'45"	\$ -	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	38.43		non-profit	MFA
4	Upper Mays 1	15.031.20.33.000	45°10'8"	92°49'57"	\$ 2,750,000.00	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	38.24	0.11	non-profit	MFA
5	Upper Mays 2	15.031.20.34.0001	45°10'8"	92°49'43"	\$ -	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	47.98	0.81	non-profit	MFA
6	Lower Mays 1	22.031.20.21.0001	45°9'55"	92°49'41"	\$ -	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	34.64	0.72	non-profit	MFA
7	Lower Mays 2	22.031.20.13.0001	45°9'45"	92°49'24"	\$ -	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	16.66	0.38	non-profit	MFA
8	South Mays Schoolhouse	22.031.20.14.0001	45°9'44"	92°49'3"	\$ 840,000.00	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	30.17	0.17	non-profit	MFA
9	Square Lake Access	23.031.20.23.0001	45°9'42"	92°48'45"	\$ 937,000.00	Washington	Forested, Shoreline	Fee Title Acquisition	38.22	0.09	non-profit	MFA
	Hackman 1	14.031.20.14.0001	45°10'33"	92°47'49"	\$ -	Washington	Prairie, Forested, Cropland	Fee Title Acquisition	39.6	0	non-profit	MFA
	Hackman 2	14.031.20.13.0006	45°10'33"	92°48'3"	\$ -	Washington	Prairie, Forested, Cropland	Fee Title Acquisition	18.8	0	non-profit	MFA
	Mays Lake				\$ -	Washington			25			
	Clear Lake				\$ -	Washington			31			
	<b>Totals</b>				<b>\$ 10,533,000.00</b>				<b>538.92</b>	<b>3.16</b>		

**NOTES:**

- 1.) For parcels noted as (Mfa and Mackey) (Village 1 and 2) and (Upper Mays 1 and 2 and Lower Mays 1 and 2) are combined.
  - 2.) Lake areas are not included in Total #of Acres, Total Acres with Lakes and Hackman parcels is 653.3 Acres
  - 4.) The Hackman Parcels have an existing conservation easement to Washington County and thus are exempt from LCCMR grant and not included in the total area.
  - 5.) Total Acres of Land Cover Types for acquisition, does not include Hackman Parcels.
- 594.92 Total Acres with Lakes  
597.32 Total Acres with Hackman parcels  
653.32 Total Acres with Lakes and Hackman parcels
- |                               |                              |                      |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 173 Agricultural and grasslar | 21 Maple-Basswood forest     | 2 Emergent marsh     |
| 206 Mesic oak forest          | 6 Oak woodland-brushland     | 2 Poor fen and marsh |
| 50 Pine plantation            | 70 Developed areas and Roads | 1 Wet meadow         |
| 2 Hardwood swamp              | 3 Alder shrub swamp          | 3 Wetland            |





**KEY TO FEATURES**

- Acquisition Parcel Name
- Hackman Parcels
- Gateway Trail R/W

**Total Acquisition Area: 539 acres**  
**Price: \$10,533,000**

0 220 440 880 1,320  
Feet

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N

**Wilder Forest Acquisition and Preservation Project**

May Township  
 Washington County  
 Minnesota Food Association  
**ENRTF ID: 180-G**



## Wilder Forest Acquisition for Conservation, Preservation and Education

### Organization Description and Mission

Minnesota Food Association (MFA) is a thirty-year-old nonprofit organization whose mission is to build a sustainable food system based on social, economic and environmental justice through training, education and partnerships. MFA has operated Big River Farms at the Wilder Forest property for over 10 years. Each year at Big River Farms, more than 40 beginning farmers learn how to grow organic food, nurture our soil and protect our waters.

To ensure success, MFA has assembled a diverse multi-sector, interdisciplinary group of partners to develop a long-term management plan, as well as educational programs and training initiatives to support innovation in the field of sustainable resource management and policy development. Key partners include the University of Minnesota staff and Extension, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, Farmers Legal Action Group, and others.

### Current Foundation and Corporate Donors

AgStar, AgStar Financial Services, Farmer's Legal Action Group FLAG, HOPE, HRK Foundation, Hugh J. Andersen Foundation, Lakewinds Natural Foods, Marbrook, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Environmental Partnership, The Benevity Community Impact Fund, The Beverly Foundation, The Saint Paul Foundation, The Wedge, University of Minnesota, USDA BFRDP, USDA Treas 310, Yackel Foundation.

### Project Manager and Leadership Team Qualifications and Responsibilities

#### Project Manager: Hilary Otey Wold, Executive Director, Minnesota Food Association

Hilary Otey Wold has over 15 years of nonprofit leadership experience, a BA in Sociology from Merrimack College and an MBA in Public and Nonprofit Management from Boston University. Ms. Wold has proven skills in program development, strategic communication, partnership creation and project management, enabling her to produce desired programmatic and financial results. In her previous role, Ms. Wold managed a four-million-dollar operating budget with a full complement of 80 staff members. Her role in this project is to:

- Oversee budget, fundraising and management of consulting partners
- Manage planning and execution of the integrated comprehensive management and education plan
- Facilitate partnership and program development to ensure goal alignment
- Coordinate activities of all funding, programs and community partners to deliver desired outcomes

#### Joel Kellum, Farm Manager, Minnesota Food Association

Joel Kellum contributes almost 20 years of experience in sustainable land and resource management. His expertise is in organic farming, permaculture and agroforestry project planning, implementation and management. Mr. Kellum's role in this project will be to guide the development and implementation of the integrated comprehensive management and education plan.

#### Daniel Tilsen, Board of Directors President and Land Task Force Chair, Minnesota Food Association

Daniel Tilsen has over 40 years of experience in civil engineering, land planning, surveying, acquisition, and project management. Mr. Tilsen worked at the MnDNR for more than a decade on a wide variety of projects, including state parks, trails, boat access, and harbors. He continues to specialize in recreational, wildlife and natural resource design with an interest in sustainable organic food systems. Mr. Tilsen's role in the project will be to facilitate intergovernmental relations, nurture partner relations, and provide strategic guidance.

