



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2021 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2021-145

Proposal Title: Preserving Grindstone Lake's Shoreline: McConnell Property Acquisition

Project Manager Information

Name: Bryan Wood

Organization: Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center

Office Telephone: (320) 245-2648

Email: wood@ospreywilds.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center (formerly Audubon Center of the North Woods) seeks to purchase and protect 11 acres of undeveloped lakefront property on Grindstone Lake bordering its nature campus.

Funds Requested: \$640,000

Proposed Project Completion: 2021-07-31

LCCMR Funding Category: Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation (G)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): Central

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): Central

When will the work impact occur?

In the Future

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

11 acres of land on Grindstone Lake and adjacent to Osprey Wilds are up for sale, and faces near certain development if not funded through this proposal. Owner Judy McConnell is in favor of selling to Osprey Wilds, but she is not taking the property off the market, making this opportunity extremely urgent. Osprey Wilds would be thrilled to add this land to its 783-acre campus for many reasons. The land for sale has 427 contiguous feet of undeveloped shoreline on Grindstone Lake, some of the last remaining on the unique, beautiful lake. Grindstone Lake is listed by the State of Minnesota as an "Outstanding Recreational Value Water". Totalling 533 acres, it is 153 feet deep with an average Secchi disk reading of 11.5 feet, making it one of the clearest public water access lakes outside of the Arrowhead region. Only 90 miles north of the Twin Cities, Grindstone Lake is Minnesota's southernmost lake with lake trout, and is home to rainbow and brown trout, tullibee and sturgeon. Grindstone Lake is the headwater for the North Branch of the Grindstone River, a designated trout stream which flows into the Kettle River, a Minnesota Wild and Scenic River.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? i.e. What are you seeking funding to do? You will be asked to expand on this in Activities and Milestones.

We have been in touch with seller Judy McConnell for nearly two years about our interest in her 11-acre property it should it ever become available. She decided to sell it last summer but was not yet ready to consider Osprey Wilds seeking grant funding to purchase the property. We have remained in touch since then and she now is interested and hopeful that Osprey Wilds will be the purchaser, so that the land be may conserved and that she can help the lake that she grew up on and so dearly loves by having the land protected in perpetuity. This property resides within Osprey Wilds' contiguous property boundaries, a parcel of a larger segment of land that was sold from the Schwyzer Family (who bequethed their property to become Osprey Wilds) to the McConnell family 80+ years ago. To be able to add eleven acres back into Osprey Wilds' property and ensure its protection and that this 427 feet of shoreline will never be developed would be a very meaningful way we could help Grindstone Lake's long-term health. This property would be available to the public, and would also be utilized by our staff with our K-12 school groups.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

1) That this acreage will protected forever in its natural state; free of buildings, structures, and roads; 2) That we will enhance future wildlife & native plant populations by adding these eleven acres to our 783-acre campus, creating over 794 continuous acres of natural habitat, and keeping in place important wildlife and natural corridors; 3) That we will preserve 427 feet of undeveloped shoreline, improving Grindstone Lake's long-term health; 4) That we will conserve this land for educational programs and recreation opportunities, connecting untold numbers of individuals to the outdoors through environmental education and outdoor recreation on this property.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Purchase Property

Activity Budget: \$640,000

Activity Description:

We will hire a state-authorized appraiser to appraise the property and then close on the purchase.

We have secured funds from an Osprey Wilds board member who is donating the necessary funds for the appraisal, closing costs and 2021 property tax costs.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Close on Property	2021-07-31
Appraisal	2021-07-31

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this be funded?

We have a signed purchase agreement, pending ENRTF funds. We plan to close on the purchase July 2021, and will pay for the appraisal, closing costs, and 2021 property tax expenses out of organizational budget funds. Afterward, there will be no significant ongoing funds necessary for this property. We will monitor the land for invasive species and use volunteer and staff labor to remove any invasives found. A recently completed state biological survey shows there are noteworthy species close to this property including common mudpuppy, red-shouldered hawk, blunt-lobed grape fern and narrow-triangle moonwort. We will update our property maps also.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Increasing Residential Environmental Learning Center Opportunities	M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 05g	\$130,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Bryan Wood

Job Title: Executive Director

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

Bryan Wood has served as Executive Director for Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center (formerly Audubon Center of the North Woods) since 2009. During that time, Bryan has managed over \$2 million in grant projects including a \$1,500,000 ENRTF grant in 2010 among six Minnesota residential environmental learning centers for energy improvements and demonstrations, a \$130,000 ENRTF grant for K-12 residential environmental learning opportunities in 2017, a \$238,000 Conservation Partners Legacy grant in 2017 to acquire 140 acres of land adjacent to Osprey Wilds, and many others. Bryan oversees a staff of 30 employees, and an annual organizational budget of approximately \$2 million.

Organization: Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center

Organization Description:

Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center (formerly Audubon Center of the North Woods) is a private, nonprofit organization located near Sandstone in Pine County, MN whose mission is "to instill a connection and commitment to the environment in people of all communities through experiential learning". Since 1969, this has been accomplished with a wide variety of learning programs for audiences K-12 to seniors. Each year more than 4,000 K-12 students attend Osprey Wilds for residential environmental learning visits, participating in outdoor learning on our 780-acre campus.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
							Sub Total	-
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
	Fee Title Acquisition	Acres: 11 Parcels: 2						\$640,000
							Sub Total	\$640,000
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-

Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$640,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center	Osprey Wilds will contribute necessary funds for appraisal, closing costs and 2021 property taxes.	Secured	\$10,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$10,000
			Funds Total	\$10,000

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
McConnell Property	Pine	427 ft lakeshore on Grindstone Lake	Fee Title	11.29	-	\$640,000	Private	Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center	Property Under Contract
Totals				11.29	0	\$640,000			

Fee Acquisition

1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including an explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.

Osprey Wilds decided to pursue these two lots Judy McConnell is selling based on their proximity to our campus, and their high conservation value as undeveloped lakeshore on Grindstone Lake. Limiting further development around Grindstone Lake, deforestation, installation of septic tanks, and herbicide/fertilizer applications on lawns is of high priority to Osprey Wilds, which is a founding and active member of the Grindstone Lake Association. There are precious few undeveloped lots left on Grindstone Lake, and fewer yet that reside within Osprey Wilds' borders. The chance to protect these 11 acres is an opportunity we jumped at, knowing we will only have this chance once we conduct a to preserve this property.

2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified for the acquisition purposes you propose. Include the URL to the plan if one is available.

We have a land management plan for our property that can be found at the following link:

https://ospreywilds.org/OW_links/Land_Stewardship_Plan.pdf

Upon awarding, we would conduct a detailed biological survey of the property with our land management committee, and add this property's formal land management plan to our existing plans.

3. For any parcels acquired in fee title, a restoration and management plan must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.

With the lots' agricultural past and red & scotch pine plantings, we would plan to restore the property back to more pre-settlement conditions, which would be a northern hardwoods forest with white pine. We would accomplish this by selective thinnings on the red pine stands, as well as a shelterwood harvest approach on the scotch pine, removing some trees initially, waiting several years for others to get established in the mixed sunlight conditions of the understory, then removing the remaining scotch pines. There is a flowage that goes under Audubon Road and flows through this property, eventually into Grindstone Lake. We would ensure this wetland remains healthy and unencumbered. There is some reed canary grass, and we would work to reduce that and bring in more native sedges, reeds and grasses over time. The shoreline vegetation would remain intact and protect the shoreline from erosion. We would use the property and its vegetation as a classroom for our myriad educational programs.

Osprey Wilds has an active land management committee comprised of staff, board members and community members with natural resource professional backgrounds that guides decision-making and long-term management plans. Our organization has an over 50-year track record of responsible land management. All management plans are kept on file on our server at Osprey Wilds.

4. For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.

These parcels will not be transferred to the DNR, they will be owned by Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center.

5. If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [c92cc2dc-5d3.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

This file shows the two lots Judy McConnell is willing to sell to Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center. Sold together, these two lots encompass 427 feet of natural, undeveloped shoreline, and 11.29 acres of mixed deciduous and conifer forest, along with wetlands. This is some of the last undeveloped shoreline remaining on beautiful Grindstone Lake and a significant opportunity to help protect the lake's long-term health.

Financial Capacity

File: [295354d1-50b.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Osprey Wilds Board Resolution	ca4524dd-fe7.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
Grindstone Lake Association Support Letter	c3932e3e-431.pdf
Signed Purchase Agreement	04e0384a-8ed.pdf
Seller Judy McConnell Support Letter	c9550393-e35.pdf
Aerial Photo of Osprey Wilds & McConnell Property	cfac9e6d-3f0.pdf
McConnell Property Photos	15181cb1-77e.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

Yes: Fee Acquisition,

Does your project have patent, royalties, or revenue potential?

No

Does your project include research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Proposed Description for Parcel F:

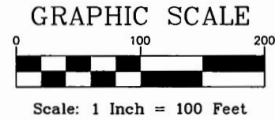
The north 212 feet of Tracts F and G, REGISTERED LAND SURVEY NO. 4, Pine County, Minnesota.

Proposed Description for Parcel G:

Tracts F and G, REGISTERED LAND SURVEY NO. 4, Pine County, Minnesota, EXCEPT the north 212 feet of said Tracts F and G.

CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY FOR JUDY MCCONNELL

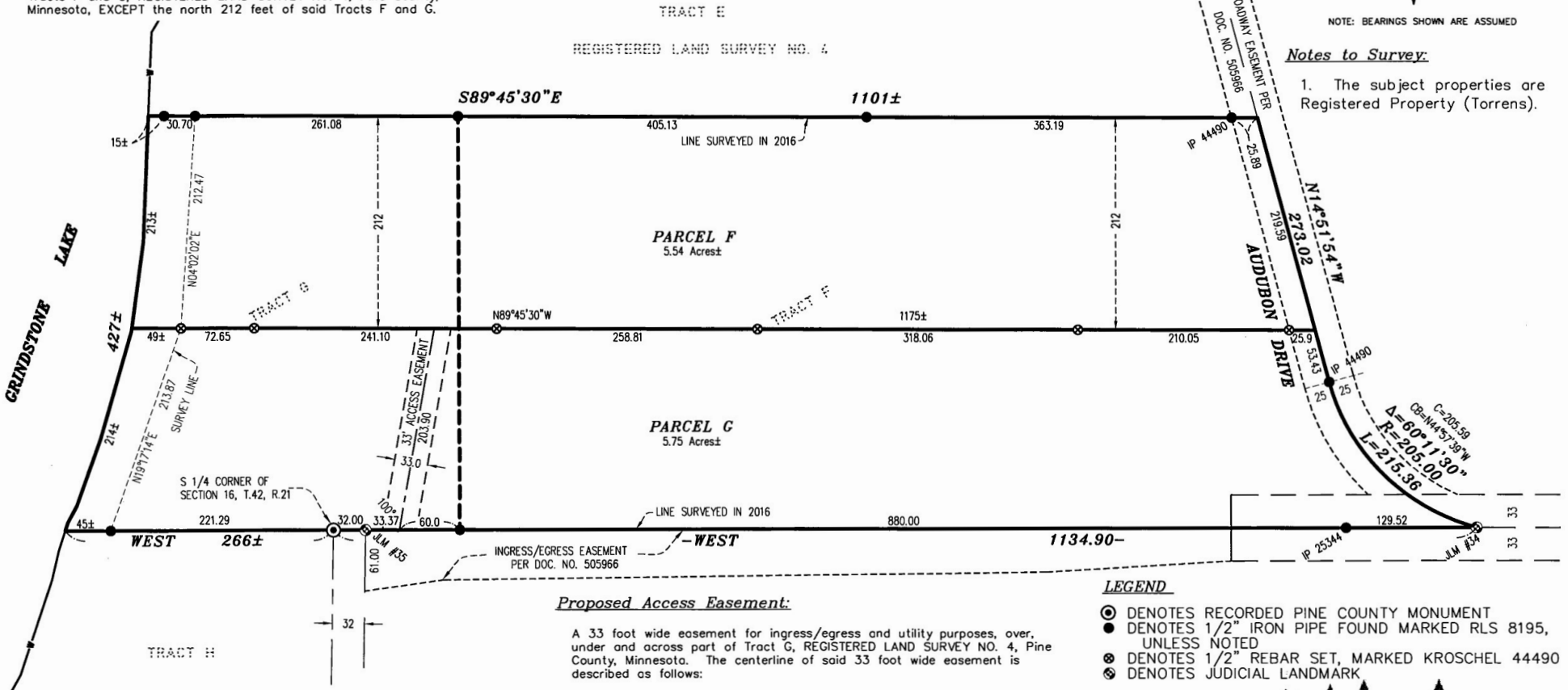
PART OF SECTION 16, TOWNSHIP 42, RANGE 21, PINE COUNTY, MINNESOTA



NOTE: BEARINGS SHOWN ARE ASSUMED

Notes to Survey:

1. The subject properties are Registered Property (Torrens).



Proposed Access Easement:

A 33 foot wide easement for ingress/egress and utility purposes, over, under and across part of Tract G, REGISTERED LAND SURVEY NO. 4, Pine County, Minnesota. The centerline of said 33 foot wide easement is described as follows:

Commencing at the southeast corner of said Tract G; thence west along the south line of said Tract G a distance of 60.0 feet to the point of beginning of the centerline to be described; thence northeasterly deflecting to the right 100 degrees a distance of 203.90 feet to the intersection with the south line of the north 212 feet of said Tract G and said centerline there terminating.

Said 33 foot wide easement to extend by its full width from the south line of said Tract G to the south line of the north 212 feet of said Tract G.

LEGEND

- ⊙ DENOTES RECORDED PINE COUNTY MONUMENT
- DENOTES 1/2" IRON PIPE FOUND MARKED RLS 8195, UNLESS NOTED
- ⊗ DENOTES 1/2" REBAR SET, MARKED KROSCHER 44490
- ⊛ DENOTES JUDICIAL LANDMARK

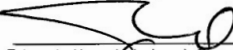


Kroschel Land Surveyors, Inc.

1639 Main Street North, Suite 6, Pine City, MN 55063
Phone: 320-629-3267 tyler@kroschelsurvey.com

I hereby certify that this survey, plan or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Land Surveyor under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

Dated this 10TH day of JANUARY 2020

By: 
Tyler J. Kroschel, Land Surveyor
Minnesota License No. 44490