



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2024 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2024-040

Proposal Title: PLSS Section Corner Remonumentation

Project Manager Information

Name: Jenny Sanders

Organization: Morrison County

Office Telephone: (320) 632-0144

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Restore and certify monuments of the Public Land Survey System. Collect geodetic coordinate values in order to secure land boundaries and improve foundational Geographic Information System (GIS) data.

Funds Requested: \$195,000

Proposed Project Completion: July 31, 2026

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary Category: Foundational Natural Resource Data and Information (A)

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?

During the Project and In the Future

Narrative

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

The Public Land Survey (PLS) was performed in Minnesota from 1847 to 1905. Most of these PLS corners were originally wooden posts. The Government Land Office (GLO) originally set these corners and gave the power of maintaining them to the State. The State gave that responsibility to the Counties. Morrison County estimates that 50% of the PLS corners in the county have been certified. Approximately 48% percent of those certified corners have geodetic coordinates determined.

These corners affect all landowners. PLS monuments are necessary to accurately depict land ownership and interest in real property, which has impacts on land transfers, parcel subdivisions, property taxation, and granting of easements. The environmental or land tie to this proposal is clear in that all resources, their use and delineation, require some description related to the corners of the PLSS. With the loss of one ¼ section corner every parcel of land within two sections are affected, the loss of one section corner has the same adverse effect in four sections.

This project will assist in achieving the goals of the Long Prairie Watershed, One Watershed One Plan program administered by BWSR. Actions include implementation of stewardship plans, conservation easements and land acquisition.

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

The Part-time Morrison County Surveyor will restore and certify 127 PLS Section Corners and Meander Corners in Scandia Valley Township lying westerly of the Camp Ripley Military Reservation in Township 132, Range 30 & 31 West of the 5th Principal Meridian. GPS coordinates will be obtained for all section corners. All section corners will be documented with a Certificate of Location of Government Land Corner accompanied by a complete history of the corner and recorded in the Morrison County Recorder's Office. By certifying and collecting highly accurate geodetic coordinates on these monuments, we will preserve their position and also allow them to be utilized to establish and preserve land boundaries, easements, and improve the accuracy of related GIS data.

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?

The project will remonument all 127 Section Corners and Meander Corners in Scandia Valley Township. The project area will be remapped for inclusion in publicly available GIS data. Land boundaries will be secure. The Long Prairie Watershed, One Watershed One Plan program, administered by BWSR, will be supported by reducing costs for implementation of stewardship plans, conservation easements and land acquisition. The County's Land Use Control Ordinance may be better applied to the Township's 31 named lakes and 27 unnamed lakes. Roads and land access easements can be property controlled.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Records Research

Activity Budget: \$57,000

Activity Description:

PLSS Remonumentation requires extensive research prior to commencing with field work. Records will be compiled from the Morrison County Recorder's Office, Morrison County Auditor's Office, Morrison County Highway Department, and Local Land Surveyors that have worked in the area. The various records will be compiled into preliminary corner certificates in order to determine search areas and complete preliminary analysis. By thoroughly examining the records, the prudent surveyor can be confident that the proper location of the corner has been monumented.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Records Search	October 31, 2024
Drafting of Surveys, Legal Descriptions, Etc. for Analysis and Search Coordinates	December 31, 2024
Drafting of Preliminary Certificates of Location and Statements of Evidence	February 28, 2025

Activity 2: Field Research and Monumentation

Activity Budget: \$88,500

Activity Description:

A thorough field search for corner evidence and final monumentation of the PLSS position. The goal is to find the position of the original monument that the GLO surveyor set.

Field reconnaissance of the area using the record research data of the Public Land Survey methods is necessary in order to narrow the search area for exploring the area for evidence. Much reconnaissance can be completed utilizing GIS maps and imagery overlays, but it cannot replace a site visit. Checks to nearby natural feature calls or other known information can often reveal alternate positions to consider in the field.

A retracement survey is made in order to locate existing monuments, occupation lines, possible corner locations and natural feature calls from PLSS field notes and historical corner positions which were identified in the research process.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Verify known corners	February 28, 2025
Initial Search for unknown corners	November 30, 2025
Final determination and monumentation	March 31, 2026

Activity 3: Corner Certification

Activity Budget: \$41,000

Activity Description:

A Certificate of Location shall be prepared and filed for each PLSS corner recovered and/or monumented according to Minnesota Statutes 381.12. This certificate shall be a complete document relating to the location, monumentation, perpetuation and history of a corner. The certificates will be recorded in the Morrison County Recorder's office.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Preliminary Certificates submitted for review to County Surveyor	April 30, 2026
Final certificates recorded at the Morrison County Recorder's Office	June 30, 2026

Activity 4: Certificate of Survey

Activity Budget: \$7,000

Activity Description:

A certificate of survey will be prepared that shows the extent of the project. The survey will be recorded in the county recorder's office. This survey ensures all stakeholders will be able to see the work completed by searching the public record.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Certificate of Survey Drafting	April 30, 2026
Preliminary Certificate submitted to the County Surveyor	May 31, 2026
Final Certificate of Survey recorded in the County Recorders Office	June 30, 2026

Activity 5: Landowner Notification

Activity Budget: \$1,500

Activity Description:

Letter to township residents notifying them that the project will be occurring and of land surveyor statutory access requirements.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Draft and Mail Letter	July 31, 2024

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
M Scott Marlin	Community Land Solutions, Inc.	Part-Time Morrison County Surveyor	Yes
Jenny Sanders	Morrison County	Morrison County Recorder - Project Manager	Yes

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 work be funded?

Once certified and recorded, the corner positions will be added to the Morrison County GIS database and other foundational data will be able to be updated. Any funding needed for long term maintenance of the corners will be provided by Morrison County. In the future, Morrison County intends to request additional funds through the LCCMR to restore PLSS corners in other areas of the county.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Jenny Sanders

Job Title: County Recorder

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

Jenny Sanders is the Morrison County Recorder. M. Scott Marlin, LS, Minnesota Land Surveyor License Number 49988 is the Part-Time County Surveyor and is a direct report to the Morrison County Recorder. Since 2019, the County Recorder has coordinated County Surveyor services in the areas of PLSS, Plat Review, Certificate of Location of Government Land Corner reviews, and other services required of the County Surveyor. The Morrison County Surveyor provides weekly office hours in the County Recorder's Office and remote support for the duration of other County office hours. The County Recorder and County Surveyor work closely in the determination and performance of the County Surveyor's workplan for Morrison County.

Mr. Marlin has 25 years of experience in Local Government in the areas of Surveying and Mapping. He spent 19 years in the Stearns County Surveyor's Office. His career with Stearns County culminated into the position of County Surveyor prior to starting his private land surveying practice, Community Land Solutions. Upon leaving Stearns County in January of 2019, he became the Part-Time Morrison County Surveyor. His experience includes the determination and maintenance of thousands of PLSS Section Corners in Minnesota. Mr. Marlin does not provide residential or commercial land surveying services in Morrison County. His land surveying services in Morrison County are exclusively in support of Morrison County's land surveying needs.

Organization: Morrison County

Organization Description:

Morrison County is a Minnesota County Government serving a population of approximately 34,000 (census 2020) in Central Minnesota. The County Seat is Little Falls, Minnesota. Little Falls is the largest city in the county with a population of approximately 9,000 and is a regional center. Morrison County has an approximate land area of 1150 square miles putting it in the upper one-third of Minnesota Counties by land area. Camp Ripley military reservation is located in the county. Major Highways include US Highway 10 and State Highways 25, 27, 28, 115, 238, and 371. In

addition to County Parks and Trails, the County is home to 2 State Parks, 12 State Wildlife Management Areas, 2 State Scientific and Natural Areas and a National Wildlife Refuge.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Recording Technician		Technician			25%	0.03		\$6,000
Auditor Technician		Warrants for Payment, AR/AP			25%	0.06		\$6,000
							Sub Total	\$12,000
Contracts and Services								
Community Land Solutions, Inc. (CLS)	Professional or Technical Service Contract	CLS contractually provides all land surveying services relating to the services of the County Surveyor. CLS will provide all records, field, drafting and monumentation services for this project.				4		\$177,000
							Sub Total	\$177,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Plastic Disks, Nails, Bolts, Ribbon, Rebar, Monument Caps, Cold Patch	Supplies for monumenting section corners					\$2,900
	Equipment	Jack Hammer Bits	Required to cut through asphalt and concrete roads					\$100
							Sub Total	\$3,000
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								

	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	26 trips @ 78 miles round trip (134 corners \ 5 corners per day estimate) @ 2023 Federal Mileage rate of \$0.655/mi	Mileage to and from job site					\$1,500
							Sub Total	\$1,500
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Letters to Township Residents	Inform Residents that Surveyor will be Working in Area					\$1,500
							Sub Total	\$1,500
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$195,000

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				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [6121acd4-c12.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Section corners, State of MN land assets, roads, section numbers, Scandia Valley Township, Camp Ripley...

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
County Board Resolution	e788b101-a36.pdf
Letter to County Board	f4cadbec-e4e.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Surveyors Estimate	43ee345a-b18.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

Yes, Morrison County Auditor/Treasurer

Does your project include the design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other capital asset costing \$10,000 or more?

Yes

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services, as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7?

No

