

**Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
FY 2011 Recommendation
Accomplishment Plan**

Date: December 21, 2009

Project or Program Title: Metro Big Rivers Habitat

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	Council Recommendation Funding	Out-Year Projections of Needs		
		FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Funds Recommended (\$000s)				
Outdoor Heritage Fund	2,397,000	0	0	0

Appropriation Language

Abstract

The Metro Big Rivers Habitat partnership will work within the Minnesota, Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers and key tributaries of the Metro Urbanizing Area to expand and improve critical habitat for game and non-game wildlife and increase public access to outdoor recreation opportunities. The partnership will use the OHF grant to protect 249 acres (175 acres by fee title acquisition and 74 acres by conservation easement) and restore / enhance another 116 acres. The partners will leverage the OHF grant with \$2,279,000 in other funds to protect another 251 acres and restore / enhance another 42 acres with other funds. In total, the partners will add 500 acres of critical habitat for public protection and access and restore / enhance 158 acres with OHF and leveraged funds.

Narrative

The three Big Rivers in the Metro Urbanizing Area provide critical habitat that must be protected and improved for resident wildlife and migrating wildlife, both game and non-game species. The Metro Big Rivers Habitat partnership will protect 249 acres and restore / enhance 144 acres with the OHF grant to significantly expand and improve wildlife habitat. It will protect an addition 251 acres and restore / enhance an additional 42 acres with leveraged funding.

The nearly 4 million Minnesotans that live in the Metro Urbanizing Area need and want increased access to hunting, fishing and other wildlife-dependent outdoor recreational opportunities close to home. The public will

have access to all of the land protected through this program for outdoor recreation. The land protected through fee title acquisition will be open for public hunting and fishing on a limited or unlimited basis. The land protected through conservation easement will be open to the public for other forms of outdoor recreation.

These resources are under extreme development pressure because of population growth and the high amenity values associated with most, if not all, of these lands. We have the opportunity now to protect these lands because the economic recession has driven down some land values and slowed development pressure. Some landowners are more interested in selling for conservation than might be the case under different economic circumstances.

This program will work because the partners have extensive experience both individually and collectively. In addition to the four partners named on the project, a number of other public and private organizations will be involved, including the MN Department of Natural Resources, numerous metro area counties and cities, and the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

All lands to be protected have been identified as high priorities through public planning processes by the public entities that will eventually own the properties or hold the easement, as follows: 1) MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS) for the Refuge lands to be acquired; 2) Local units of government (and, in one instance, possibly the DNR) for the lands to be acquired and transferred to long-term stewards by TPL; and 3) Dakota County and MN DNR for the conservation easement to be acquired to expand the Pine Bend Bluffs SNA.

All lands to be restored and/or enhanced are already under public ownership. The restoration and enhancement work to be completed on these lands is a high priority of the public entities that own the land, as follows – MN DNR for the Pine Bend Bluffs SNA enhancement work, City of St. Paul (Parks and Recreation) for the restoration on the Mississippi blufflands at Indian Mounds and Cherokee Bluff, MN DNR for restoration at the Savage and Seminary Fens, and MN DNR for enhancement of the SNAs within the Franconia-Scandia St. Croix corridors.

For each of the projects listed, the Metro Big Rivers Habitat partners have secured informal support and / or will secure the formal support of the local government when and if required when land protection projects move into the contractual stage. Restoration in all instances is supported by the local community and, in some cases, involves the involvement of local volunteers from community and sporting groups

Relationship to *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan* and other published resource management plans.

The Metro Big Rivers proposal meets the following priorities cited in the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan: protecting priority habitat; protecting critical shorelands, improving connectivity and access to outdoor recreation; restoring land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds; protecting and restoring critical in-water habitat of lakes and streams, and keeping water on the landscape.

The State Wildlife Action Plan the following specific ecological subsections in this proposal: Big Woods, Anoka Sand Plain, Mille Lacs Uplands, St. Paul – Baldwin Plains and Moraines, and Oak Savanna.

Finally, the Metro Big Rivers Habitat proposal meets two of the LSOHC's priorities in the Metro Urbanizing Section: protecting habitat corridors with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers and protecting, enhancing and restoring remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests and oak savanna with an emphasis on areas with high biological value.

Project Design and Evaluation

Describe the scope of the project in appropriate measures (i.e., acreage numbers of lakes, miles of shoreline)

Project Scope	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife (Include Description in Footnote)
Restore	39			
Protect	55	41	145	8
Enhance		53	24	

Note: Above figures are OHF grant acres only. Leveraged / donated acres are not included in these numbers.

Counties in which activities will take place	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore	Carver, Scott			
Protect	Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Scott, Sibley, and/or Washington	Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Scott, Sibley, and/or Washington	Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Scott, Sibley, and/or Washington	Anoka, Chisago, Scott or Washington
Enhance		Ramsey, Washington, Chisago	Dakota	

Acres Within Each Ecological Section	Metropolitan-Urbanizing Area	Forest-Prairie Transition	Southeast Forest	Prairie Region	Northern Forest
Restore	39				
Protect	249				
Enhance	77				

Funding Per Ecological Section	Metropolitan-Urbanizing Area	Forest-Prairie Transition	Southeast Forest	Prairie Region	Northern Forest
Restore	\$71,274				
Protect	\$2,202,000				
Enhance	\$123,726				

Funding Resource Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore	\$71,274			
Protect	\$578,080	\$416,160	\$967,760	\$240,000
Enhance		\$98,426	\$25,300	

Acquisition and Tax Data	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability			6	4
Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability	52	35	74	4
Permanent Easement	3	6	65	

Note regarding data submitted in the tables above: TPL will be working in 5 project areas totaling 1500 acres under this Metro Big Rivers habitat program: Savage Fen area, Pike Lake area, Rum River confluence, Big Marine area and Scandia / Franconia area. The total acreage in those 5 areas is 1,500 acres. TPL expects that only two of the five project areas (50 grant acres and 50 leveraged acres) will progress to the point of successful protection given progress with landowners, long-term stewards and the reduced level of funding. TPL cannot at this time predict which of the five project areas will move forward to completion with this funding. As a result, TPL has completed this Accomplishment Plan using the ratio of attributes across the entire 1500 acres (habitat types, leveraged funds, etc.) and applied the same ratio to the 50 grant acres and 50 leveraged acres that will be protected with this funding. All future TPL reports to LSOHC will describe progress made in all five project areas and, therefore, the specific TPL accomplishments by habitat type, leveraged funding, etc.

Budget

Budget Item	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
Personnel	\$23,300	\$20,300	
Contracts / Seasonal Crew	\$72,700	\$62,700	
Equipment/Tools	\$ 2,900	\$ 2,900	
Materials/Supplies	\$ 3,300	\$ 3,000	
Fee Acquisition	\$1,750,000	\$250,000	
Easement Acquisition	\$200,000		
Easement Stewardship			
Travel	\$3,100	\$2,800	
Additional Budget Items			
TOTAL	\$2,055,300	\$341,700	

Relationship to Current Budget

Friends of Mississippi River -- FMR's budget for fiscal year 2010 is \$1,268,000. Excluding the \$200,000 of the OHF grant for acquisition of the conservation easement, the remaining \$20,300 is less than 2% of the total organizational budget.

Great River Greening – GRG's total budget for 2009 is \$980,000, of which approximately 85% is direct project money for on-the-ground work. The OHF grant of \$169,700 will fund for direct project support that is not part of the organization's base budget. Over the two years of the grant, 10% of the budget is for existing full-time staff; no projects will be affected.

Minnesota Valley Trust, Inc. – The OHF grant of \$500,000 is 0% of the organization's FY10 operating budget of \$314,470. Annual capital expenditures vary based on project readiness and grant funds available. This OHF grant will supplement the Trust's budget and enable it to move aggressively to expand the MN Valley Refuge. As there are no personnel in the budget and this will provide funding to fulfill the organization's mission, no current projects or duties will be affected.

Trust for Public Land – The OHF grant of \$1,500,000 is 0% of TPL's operating budget of \$1,800,000 for FY11. TPL's operating budget includes all program and administrative costs, including legal and due diligence. But it does not include the actual fee title acquisition of lands. The OHF grant and planned-for leverage are *not included* in TPL's operating budget. These 50 grant acres and additional 50 leveraged acres would not be protected *but for* these LSOHC funds.

Personnel

List the positions, name (if known) and anticipated program funds to be paid by this recommendation

Position	Name	Amount
Conservation Director (FMR)	Tom Lewanski	\$2,000
Ecologist (FMR)	Karen Schik	\$5,000
Ecologist 1 (GRG)	Todd Rexine	\$4,140
Ecologist 2 (GRG)	Changes with project	\$22,115
Project Assistant (GRG)	Changes with project	\$1,935
Volunteer Manager (GRG)	Mark Turbak	\$8,400

Leverage

List the sources and amounts of leverage you have in hand or anticipate by fiscal year.

SOURCE	FY 11		FY 12		FY 13	
	In hand	Anticipated	In hand	Anticipated	In hand	Anticipated
State						
BWSR		\$5,000		\$5,000		
ENRTF or Bonding		\$645,000				
Non state						
Dakota County	\$160,000					
Landowner		\$50,000				
FMR (partner)	\$10,000		\$5,000			
NFWF (foundation)	\$15,000		\$15,000			
MVT (partner)	\$250,000		\$250,000			
LWCF (federal) or Local Bonding		\$855,000				

In-kind/Volunteer						
DNR in-kind		\$4,000		\$4,000		
Volunteers		\$3,000		\$3,000		
TOTAL	\$435,000	\$1,562,000	\$270,000	\$12,000		

Leverage	State				Non-State			
	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore	\$8,000							
Protect	\$186,000	\$138,000	\$237,000	\$99,000	\$392,400	293,800	\$737,800	\$126,000
Enhance		\$10,000				\$36,000	\$15,000	

Accomplishment Timeline

<i>Milestones</i>	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	Budgetary Expenditure
Minnesota Valley Trust, Inc. – fee title acquired	250 acres	250 acres		\$500,000 OHF + \$500,000 other funds leveraged
Trust for Public Land – fee title acquired	100 acres			\$1,500,000 OHF + \$1,500,000 other funds leveraged
Friends of Mississippi River – conservation easement acquired	150 acres			\$202,000 OHF + \$210,000 other funds leveraged
Friends of Mississippi River – enhancement completed	23 acres	15 acres		\$25,300 OHF + \$15,000 other funds leveraged
Great River Greening – restoration and enhancement activities completed	60 acres	60 acres		\$169,700 OHF + \$54,000 other funds leveraged

Maintenance and Sustainability

Minnesota Valley Refuge lands will be maintained by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

TPL will work with the long-term land steward in each of these five project areas to ensure that the land is restored, managed and stewarded in the long term. TPL will also work with local citizens in each area to ensure the long-term steward has the on-going support and resources needed to carry out these responsibilities.

The expense of restoration/enhancement on the front end is a major hurdle that first must be overcome. The cost of ongoing management after this point is relatively low and will be accommodated in the existing program funds of the land steward.

Metro Big Rivers Project Areas



