

Program Title: Lake Waconia Shoreline Preservation and Public Water Access

**Request for Funding Form
Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Fiscal Year 2011**

Program or Project Title: # 25 Lake Waconia Shoreline Preservation and Public Water Access

Date: November , 2009

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	Council Funding Request	Out-Year Projections of Needs		
Funds Requested (\$000s)	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Outdoor Heritage Fund	\$1,260,000	0	0	0

A. Summary

Our program will protect 19 acres and 915 feet of shoreline on the second largest lake in the metropolitan area, Lake Waconia. The project will restore eight acres to big woods and oak savanna. Approximately 1.5 acres, including 800 feet of shoreline, would be planted with native shoreland vegetation. Protection is accomplished through partnering local, regional and L-SOHC funds to acquire the site. Impacts are achieved by following an existing ecological stewardship and water resources management plan created as a part of a master plan for the site.

In the future, but not requested as a part of this grant, seven acres of the site and 100 feet of the shoreline would be developed for public fishing and watercraft access with 40 vehicle trailer stalls. Development of public access is achieved through partnering regional and state funding.

B. Background Information

1. What is the problem or opportunity being addressed?

Lakeshore along Lake Waconia continues to be lost to urbanization. Carver County has been notified that 19 acres of land it intends to protect and restore as part of a larger

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conservation and recreation space is for sale. An opportunity exists to acquire this land including 915 feet of shoreline.

Additionally, public access to Lake Waconia's 3080 acres of public water is limited. The County has a locally and regionally approved master plan to provide conservation space and recreational land for a boat access on the lake. This master plan has gone through an extensive public review and approval process. Planning for a regional park on Lake Waconia has been ongoing since the 1970's. An opportunity exists to implement past planning work which includes the 1995 acquisition master plan for Lake Waconia Regional Park and the 2001 development master plan. These plans have received approval by Carver County and the Metropolitan Council. Acquisition of the 19 acre site completes acquisition of the 126 acre conservation and recreational area. Public support for the project has been demonstrated by Anglers for Habitat, resolution of support by the City of Waconia and by letter of support by representatives of DNR.

2. What action will be taken?

In conjunction with L-SOHC Funding, Carver County will assemble funding resources from Carver County and the Metropolitan Council for the acquisition of the site. The County will negotiate with the landowner the sale of property. Additional public meetings will be held informing the public of the project and consistency with existing approved plans. Work to restore the site can begin by removing 19,400 square feet, approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ acre, of a county road at the site. The road is no longer needed to access the proposed acquisition site from adjoining property. After the removal of roadway, implementation of ecological stewardship and water resources management plan for the site can begin. Eight acres of agricultural field is to be restored to a combination of big woods and oak savanna, and approximately 800 feet of shoreline (almost 1.5 acres) is to be restored along the lake. Native plant species will be planted as part of the restoration where practical. Lake Waconia is a high priority lake for a public water access. Work will also begin with the DNR to plan the development of a boat access.

To ensure efficient and effective restoration work, Carver County would contract with a qualified service provider for the project. To be included with the restoration work is a two year maintenance program. After which, the County would take over maintenance of restored areas as a part of the County's ongoing commitment to the site.

3. Who will take action and when?

Upon approval, this program by the L-SOHC and ultimately the Legislature, Carver County will take the following action:

- Negotiate the purchase and acquisition of the land from the current owner and work to complete negotiations by May of 2011 or upon closing.
- Utilize \$1,700,000 of available acquisition opportunity funds from the Metropolitan Council by May of 2011 or upon closing.
- Utilize \$567,000 in County funds by May of 2011 or upon closing.
- Include the site into the park operations and maintenance budget, prepare to manage site, budget funds in July 2010.
- Coordinate with the City of Waconia the removal of an existing road surface along the lake. Remove road surface by November 2011.

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- Coordinate with the City of Waconia an interim pedestrian/bike trail connecting the park with the existing city trail system on a portion of the existing roadway surface.
- Request funding for the development of plans to create public boat access as a part of the County CIP by July 2010.
- Contract with restoration service provider to complete restorative work by June 2012.
- Apply for development funds from the DNR for the development of the public access spring of 2011.

4. How will you coordinate this program with the other Constitutional Funding?

Carver County has notified Metropolitan Council staff to inform them of this application to the L-SOHC grant.

The Metropolitan Council receives Parks and Trails funding from the constitutional amendment. These funds are matched with Metropolitan Council Bonds for land acquisition and put into a fund identified as the Land Acquisition Opportunity Fund. Additionally, funding from the Metropolitan Council Acquisition Opportunity Funds, a combination of constitutional funding and Council bonds, requires a 25% local match by Carver County for acquisition of the proposed site. The proposed project leverages both regional and local funding as a match to L-SOHC funds.

5. What specific habitat changes will occur if this item is funded? Be specific about and list multiple benefits if they exist.

Land will be preserved as part of Lake Waconia Regional Park, preventing it from being urbanized.

Over 19,000 square feet, or almost ½ acre of paved road along Lake Waconia, will be removed. Eleven thousand square feet of pavement on site, plus an additional 8,000 square feet, would be removed by agreement on adjoining property. Twenty eight thousand square feet (over ½ acre) of shoreline will be restored to a more native plant community which will create wildlife habitat, improve water quality, reduce storm water runoff and create additional natural buffer around the lake from urbanization.

Eight acres of agricultural field will be restored to native woodlands and savanna which will create shoreline and upland habitat for wildlife on this 3080 acre lake. This site, in conjunction with 107 acres of adjacent public land, will provide habitat for wildlife including migratory birds, large and small upland species in the region.

6. When do you expect to see these habitat changes?

In the fall of 2011, acquired fields will no longer be farmed and work could begin to replant the non native areas to woodlands and savanna. After the land is acquired, over 19,400 square feet of paved road can be removed from along the lake and 800 feet of shoreline would be restored with native plants.

7. Will your Outdoor Heritage Fund dollar request complete the planned accomplishments?

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☐ YES ☒ NO

If not, how will you finance completion?

Additional funding for the land acquisition is proposed through the Metropolitan Council's Acquisition Opportunity Fund. It is proposed that \$1,700,000.00 come from the Acquisition Opportunity Fund of the Metropolitan Council. As a match to Acquisition Opportunity Funds, Carver County would contribute \$567,000.00 towards the acquisition of the site.

8. How will you pay for the maintenance of the accomplishments?

Included in this request, Carver County is asking for 2 years of annual maintenance for the restoration work to make sure it is successfully established, after which Carver County will budget ongoing operations and maintenance to maintain the investment.

After the initial acquisition of the site, operations and maintenance funding would be provided by Carver County and the Metropolitan Council as a part of ongoing relationship to administer its public conservation and recreational areas. Carver County is staffed to administer and maintain the site. Carver County currently administers large conservation and recreational features at 3 regional parks and trail areas comprising of over 822 acres within the county.

9. How does this action directly restore, enhance, or protect prairies, wetlands, forests or habitat for fish, game, and wildlife?

This program protects 19 acres of land and 915 feet of lakeshore from being urbanized. In addition to the preservation of this site for public use, eight acres of it will be planted with native woodlands and savanna plants that will provide additional habitat for wildlife. Additionally, 800 feet of shoreline will be planted, creating habitat for wildlife, reducing storm water runoff, enhancing water quality and helping to reduce shoreline erosion. Buffering the lakeshore with upland and shoreline vegetation will improved water quality and will provide better fish habitat for the lake. Acquiring this parcel will allow for the removal of a section of road surface to be restored to a plant community and will eliminate a significant non permeable surface along the lakeshore.

10. If you are restoring or enhancing property, is the activity on permanently protected land?

☒ YES ☐ NO

If yes briefly describe the kind of protection.

By agreement with the Metropolitan Council, Carver County will place a restrictive covenant on the site on the property ensuring that the land and restoration improvements are held publicly into perpetuity.

11. How will you ensure transparency and provide information about your work and use of Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars.

Carver County regularly manages grants for land acquisition and has demonstrated it is capable of providing documented reports and other information needed to ensure the funds were properly utilized. Carver County, as a governmental entity, is accountable for public dollars spent through a number of public processes which include public hearings, a citizen park commission, elected county board, and the Metropolitan Council.

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Information is available on the Carver County website, including meeting agendas and minutes of the county board and park commission, Metropolitan Council along with planning documents of comprehensive plans and park and trail master plans. Grant files are maintained and are available for public review.

12. Why will this strategy work?

The acquisition of this land will protect the lakeshore from urbanization and improve the habitat for wildlife and fish. A restrictive covenant will be placed on the land ensuring the public that the land will remain available and protected into perpetuity. By removing the paved road and restoring the shoreline to native plantings, it will meet the goals of the Carver County Water Management plan to have impervious surfaces at least 50' away from lakes and streams. The restoration of the shoreline will also reduce storm water runoff into Lake Waconia by creating a vegetative buffer which will improve the aquatic habitat for fish and also provide habitat for wildlife. Protecting the land ensures that plans for public access will be realized.

13. Who might make decisions that assist or work against achieving the expected impact program?

Many different decision makers have input into the success of this project including Carver County Park Commission, Carver County Board, Metropolitan Park and Open Space Commission, Metropolitan Council, City of Waconia and Anglers for Habitat.

The Carver County Board, County Park Commission and City of Waconia continue to be supportive in the acquisition of land needed for shoreline preservation and boat access. Their decisions to support the land acquisition include planning documents such as the Carver County 2020 Comprehensive Plan, 1995 Lake Waconia Regional Park Acquisition Master Plan, 2001 Lake Waconia Regional Park Development Master Plan and recently submitted Carver County 2030 Comprehensive Plan. All of the fore-mentioned plans went through extensive public processes and were approved at a local and regional level. Additionally, the City of Waconia has also shown its support and desire for land needed for conservation and recreation on Lake Waconia by including the land needed for the boat access and conservation space in their land use plan. The city also provided Resolution No. 2008-34, a resolution of support for additional conservation space and public boat access.

14. If this is acquisition of land, has the local government formally approved the acquisition?

☒ **X** **YES**

☐ **NO**

The site is located within an approved acquisition master plan boundary approved by both the Carver County Board and Metropolitan Council. County staff has received additional direction from County Administration and County Board in the form of authorizing/obtaining appraisals and submitting grant funding requests. An actual purchase agreement has not been authorized.

15. If this is fee simple acquisition of land, is the land free of any other permanent protection such as a conservation easement?

 X YES

 NO

16. If this is an easement acquisition, will the eased land be open for public use?

N/A

 YES

 NO

If Yes what kind of use?

17. If easement acquisition, will the easement be a permanent conservation easement as described in MS 2009, Chapter 84C.01, specifically protecting the natural resource values of real property forever?

N/A

 YES

 NO

18. If you are proposing funding for a new or ongoing program how long into the future do you expect this program to operate?

N/A

 Years

19. Which planning sections will you work in? Check all that apply in the list below.

 Northern Forest

 Forest/Prairie Transition

 Southeast Forest

 Prairie

 X Metropolitan Urbanizing Area

20. Does the request address an urgent conservation opportunity that will be lost if not immediately funded?

 X YES

 NO

If yes, please explain.

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Carver County has been notified by a commissioned realtor that the 19 acres site is currently for sale.

21. Does the request restore and/or enhance habitat on existing state-owned Wildlife or Aquatic Management Areas or Scientific and Natural Areas?

 YES

 X NO

If Yes, list the names of the AMAs, WMAs and/or SNAs and the acres to be restored and/or enhanced.

22. Is this request based on assessment through a science based strategic planning and evaluation model similar to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Strategic Habitat Conservation model?

 X YES

 NO

If yes explain the model briefly.

The Carver County Water management Plan was adopted in June 2001. A TMDL study has been conducted for watershed at Lake Waconia. Additionally, a ecological stewardship plan exists as a part of the master plan for the site.

23. Explain the scientific foundation for your project, and the benefits it will produce.

This program will restore 800 feet of shoreline. Research indicates that natural vegetation along lakes will protect water quality by trapping, filtering, and impeding runoff laden with nutrients, sediments, and other pollutants. Shoreline buffers also stabilize banks, screen shoreland development, reduce erosion, and provide important habitat for shoreline species.

In conjunction with the shoreline restoration, this project and planned work on adjacent land will remove of over 19,000 square feet of paved road surface from the edge of Lake Waconia. The removal of this paved surface will reduce storm water runoff which ends up in the lake.

The Woodland restoration on the site will eliminate eight acres of agricultural field in which chemicals and manure are applied. Storm water washes nutrients such as phosphorus into the lake. Restoring the site to a big woods and savanna would eliminate fertilizer applications, increase habitat for wildlife, and complement existing wooded and wetland areas of an existing 107 acre conservation and recreation space.

24. How do you set priorities? *(Be sure to list the criteria you use and the weight you give each one.)*

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- 1) Acquisition is the top priority. Without acquisition, we don't have the property rights to take away the road surface and do restoration work needed for water quality and wildlife habitat. (60%)
- 2) Second would be the removal of impervious road surface and restoration of 800 feet of shoreline. Removal of the impervious surface next to the lake is consistent with the County Water Management Plan. This reduces the amount of storm water flowing to the lake. (20%)
- 3) Re-vegetation of the roadway area comes next to stabilize soils and provide a filtering medium before water enters the lake. (15%)
- 4) Restoration of 8 acres of agricultural field to big woods and oak savanna is next. Although the site is currently vegetated with non native plants, restoration of the site with native plants is proposed for wildlife habitat purposes. (15%)

C. Relationship to the *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan* and Other Published Resource Management Plans

This program relates directly to the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan most significantly to several sections within the Habitat Recommendations part of the plan as noted below:

- Habitat Recommendation 2 – Protect critical shorelands of streams and lake

“A natural shoreline is more than an aesthetic buffer for the water; it is a complex ecosystem that provides habitat for fish and wildlife and protects water quality for the entire lake. Often, shoreline development results in the loss of these essential shoreline buffers.” (Page 69)

“...shorelands within each of Minnesota’s 22 ecological subsections should be permanently protected through acquisition.” (Page 69)

“Acquisition may protect critical shoreland habitats from degradation; assure public access for fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, and natural resource management, which is especially important given the continuing loss of access to natural shores..” (Page 69)

“The AMA statewide goal for protection of Minnesota’s 64,000-plus miles of lake and warm-water stream and river shorelands through public ownership should increase from the current 34% to 39% by 2032. These public lands include federal, state, county, and municipal ownership. These goals are based on the assumption that there will be no loss of shoreland that is currently under public protection. To achieve this goal, the vision is to acquire 1,100 miles of lake and warm-water stream habitat in the next 25 years from willing sellers to provide sustainable populations of fish and other aquatic species and greater opportunities for angling recreation for future generations.” (Page 69-70)
- Habitat Recommendation 3 – Improve connectivity and access to outdoor recreation

“Lakeshore development is increasing, urban areas are expanding, and forests are being divided into small, privately owned parcels. These changes and others are affecting outdoor recreation. Land needs to be acquired, protected, and restored to provide Minnesotans and visitors an outdoor system where they can recreate.” (page 74)

“A higher priority should be placed on actions that are needed within the next three to five years to ensure adequate outdoor recreation opportunities in future

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years. This may mean greatly accelerating acquisition of larger intact natural areas, key connection lands, most imperiled habitats, undeveloped shorelands, areas experiencing and anticipated to continue experiencing growth population growth, and areas underserved by recreational systems. The needs for outdoor recreation are a strong complement to many of the habitat recommendations.” (Page 76)

- **Habitat Recommendation 7: Keep water on the landscape**

“Retaining water on the landscape over broader areas and for longer periods is critical for improving water quality, reducing flooding, maintaining habitat for wildlife and game species, and enhancing biological diversity.” (Page 84)

“Buffers made up of natural vegetation along shorelines of rivers, lakes, and sinkholes protect water quality by trapping and filtering pollutants and impeding runoff. Buffers stabilize banks, screen shoreland development, reduce erosion, control sedimentation, and provide important habitat for shoreline species...” (Page 85)

- **Habitat Recommendation 13: Habitat and landscape conservation and training programs for all citizens**

“The state should invest in education to improve public understanding of the need for better conservation, protection, and restoration of Minnesota’s habitats and landscapes.” (Page 94)

Carver County is one of 11 implementing agencies of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space System. The regional parks system is made up of natural resource based parks which provide not only the public with recreational opportunities but also preserve, enhance and protect wildlife habitat, open space and high quality natural resources within the ever growing metropolitan area. Lake Waconia Regional Park and the Carver County Regional Park System are supported by regional planning documents of the Metropolitan Council including the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan which was approved in 2005.

Additionally the proposed project is consistent with the following plans: The Campaign for Conservation Fifty Year Vision, The LCCMR Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, and from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources –The state wildlife action plan tomorrow’s Habitat for the Wild and Rare. All three of these documents emphasize the need for shore land preservation and restoration. Additionally local documents support the preservation of land, shoreline restoration and habitat improvement including:

- 2001 Carver County Water Management Plan
- Carver County 2020 and Draft 2030 Comprehensive Plans
- 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan

Lastly, A TMDL study has been conducted for watershed at Lake Waconia and the majority of water comes from land around Lake Waconia. It has been determined that the establishment of buffer strips along ditches, streams and wetlands/lakes will reduce nutrient runoff to the watershed. It is the goal of the external reduction strategies to reduce phosphorus at Waconia Lake subwatershed by 15 percent. As a means of reducing storm water runoff and phosphorus

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entering into the lakes within the watershed, it is recommended to restore shoreline to native vegetation.

D. Budget

Budget Item	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
Personnel			
Contracts	\$7,000		
Equipment/Tools/Supplies			
Fee Acquisition	\$ 3,400,000		
Easement Acquisition			
Easement Stewardship			
Professional Services		\$110,000	
Travel			
Additional Budget Items		\$10,000	
TOTAL	\$ 3,407,000	\$120,000	

E. Personnel Details *In the space below list the names, titles and anticipated program funds to be paid by this recommendation. If you will need to fill a position just list the title and amount.*

Title	Name	Amount.
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This proposed project does not request additional ongoing staffing.

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F. All Leverage In the table below list the sources and amounts of leverage you anticipate by fiscal year you anticipate receiving it. Include state and non-state leverage.

Source of Non-State Leverage	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
Metropolitan Council – acquisition opportunity funds	\$1,700,000		
Carver County – Match to Met. Council Funds	\$567,000		
TOTAL	\$2,267,000		

G. Outcomes:

- 1) *In the first table below, quantify the outcomes you plan to achieve with the recommended funds.*
- 2) *In the second table show list the sections where outcomes will occur.*
- 3) *In the third table, allocate your recommended funds to each cell with outcomes listed in table 1.*
- 4) *In the fourth table show the leverage to be applied to each cell with outcomes listed in table 1. and*
- 5) *If you have any outcomes listed in the “protect” row in table 1, account for them according to the type of acquisition and PILT status in table 5*

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Table 1 Accomplish- ments	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore			<i>Plant 1.5 acres (800 LF) with shore land forest. Restore 8 acres of agricultural field into native big woods and oak savanna.</i>	<i>Restore 800 feet of shoreline on the largest lake in the metropolitan area improving shoreline habitat and also creating 8 acres of woodland/savanna habitat for wildlife.</i>
Protect				<i>Protect 19 acres and 915 feet of lakeshore for habitat and public use.</i>
Enhance				

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Table 2 Sections Impacted and Impact Quantifier	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore			<i>Metropolitan Urbanized Area Plant 1.5 acres (800 LF) with shore land forest. and restore 8 acres of agricultural field to big woods and oak savanna</i>	<i>Metropolitan Urbanized Area – remove 19,400 sq. ft. of paved road and restore 800 feet of shoreline</i>
Protect				<i>Metropolitan Urbanized Area - Protect 800 feet of shoreline and 19 acres from urbanization</i>
Enhance				

Table 3 Recommend Fund Allocation	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore			<i>\$45,000 for 8 acres of woodlands and savanna restoration</i>	<i>\$75,000 for shoreline restoration including cost of road removal and two years of maintenance on restored area</i>
Protect				<i>\$1,140,000 for acquisition of 19 acres and 915 feet of shoreline.</i>
Enhance				

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Table 4 Leverage \$	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore				
Protect				<i>\$2,267,000.00</i>
Enhance				

Table 5 Acquisition Data	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability				
Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability				<i>19. acres with 915 feet of shoreline for \$3,400,000</i>
Permanent Easement				

H. Accomplishment Time Table Using the headings below, include a clear statement of how much of what is being accomplished and when. Attach a map showing where accomplishments are anticipated. Accomplishments should clearly restore, enhance or protect forests, wetlands, prairies and habitat for fish, game and wildlife.

Milestone	Date	Measure
Purchase Agreement for 19 Acres	4-30-2011	Signed Agreement
Restore 8 acres of woodlands and savanna	5-30-2012	Sight planted
Restore 800 feet of shoreline (1.5 acres)	5-30-2012	Road removed and shoreline planted

I. Relationship to Your Current Budget

The 2009 County park operations and CIP budget is \$1,142,594. This request of \$1,260,000 is more than the entire annual budget. The proposed request does not supplant existing funding sources for County Park operations and CIP. The proposed project leverages \$567,000 in additional County resources, and \$1,700,000 in Metropolitan Council Resources. The funding request supplements funding from these sources to accomplish the project.

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J. How Will the Habitat Improvements Be Sustained?

Funding for initial habitat establishment and maintenance is included in the grant request for a 2 year period. Thereafter, Carver County will budget for the ongoing maintenance needed to maintain restoration work for the site as well as provide operations funding. Carver County has experience in habitat restoration projects and collaborates with the others, including the Carver County Soil and Water Conservation District, MN DNR and other specialized contractors to provide assistance, expertise and equipment when needed to help manage and maintain the habitat within the Carver County Regional Park System.

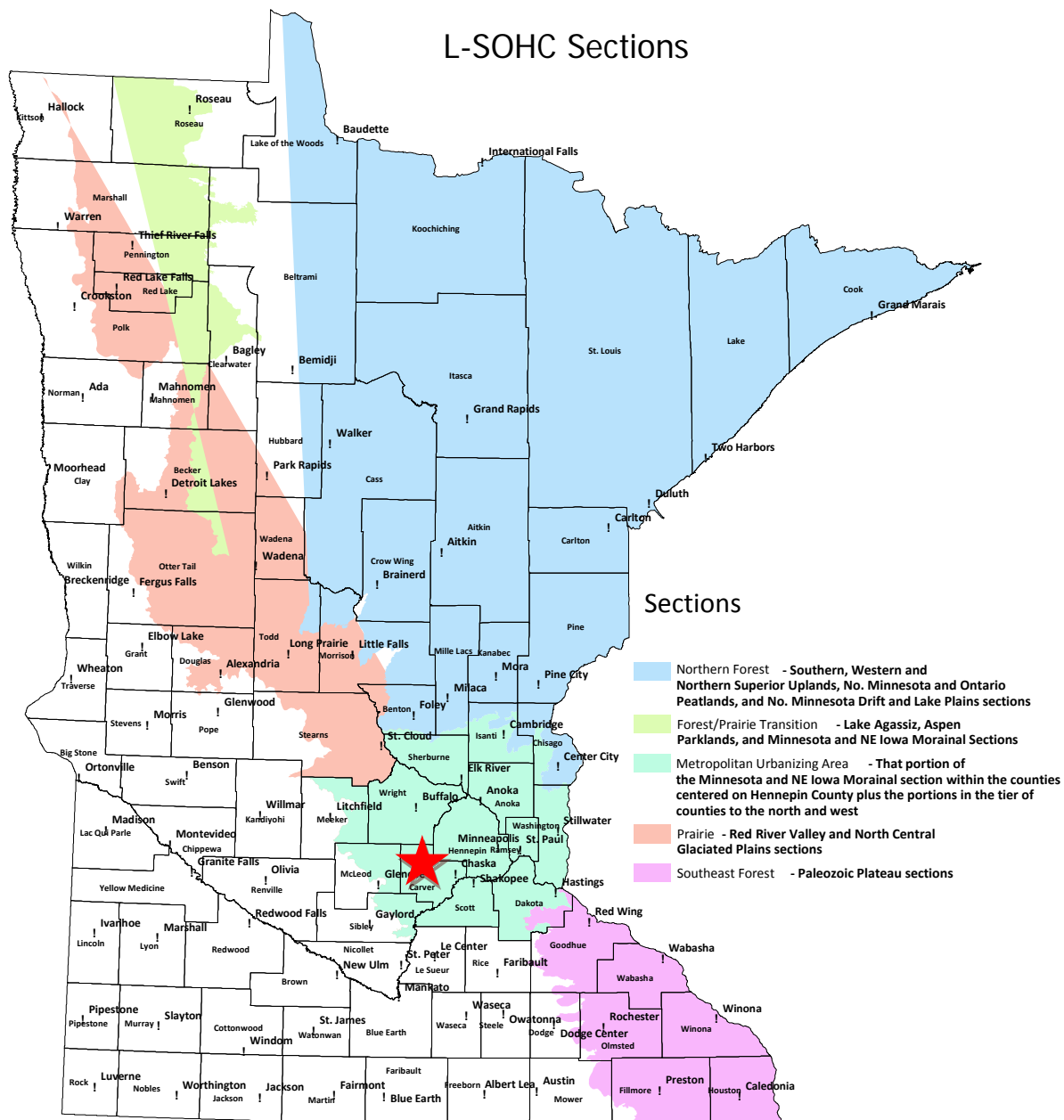
Additionally, staff has the experience and knowledge needed to maintain a natural resource based park system. Currently, Carver County owns and manages 822 acres of parks and trails.

K. Attach a list of your projects listing their county location and edit the map of Minnesota on the next page to show each project as a symbol.

2009 Project(s)

The 19.25 acre project site is located in the southwest 7 county metropolitan area. The site borders the southern shore of Lake Waconia and TH 5.

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