

L-SOHC Questionnaire

Program Request Title: 1 550 Acre Land Acquisition along the Rum River and Cedar Creek in Anoka County

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A. REQUEST FOR FUNDING OVERVIEW:

1. Why there is an urgent need to act NOW?

The proposed acquisition parcels are currently owned by a development group planning to sell the land for residential construction. The acquisition and protection of these parcels is of utmost concern, because without immediate action, this opportunity could be permanently lost. By acquiring this land, the L-SOHC has an excellent opportunity to increase and enhance the biological diversity in the area, as well as create additional hunting and fishing opportunities in the region.

B. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT FOR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

1. Tell the Council how much of your proposal is acquisition and how much restoration/enhancement?

100% of the project in this proposal is acquisition. This project will acquire and protect 550 acres of prairie, wetland, forest and shoreline habitat for fish, game and wildlife along the Rum River and Cedar Creek in the cities of Oak Grove and Andover. This project will protect 1½ miles of shoreline along the Rum River and ¾ of a mile along Cedar Creek. Restoration and enhancement of the natural resources will occur after acquisition, separate from this proposal.

2. How will the public be able to use all the projects in this program and enjoy the benefits of this public investment?

Acquiring and protecting the 550 acres of land not only benefits the prairie, wetland, forest and shoreline habitat in the area, but being under public ownership, it also allows public access to the resources for hunting and fishing in the area.

C. PRIORITIES

1. Specifically, how does your program address the Council's statewide and/or regional priorities?

This project addresses the LSOHC's statewide and regional priorities by acquiring and protecting land that is identified in the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan as a site of high biodiversity value based on the Minnesota County Biological Survey. In addition, according to the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan, the project area scored high in the areas of integrated terrestrial value and integrated aquatic habitat quality.

This project is supported by the Andover Comprehensive Plan; Oak Grove Parks and Open Space Plan; Cedar Creek Conservation Corridor Strategic Plan; Metropolitan Conservation Corridors Plan; Anoka County Comprehensive Open Space Plan; and the Anoka Conservation District Open Space Plan.

2. Tell the Council how do you set priorities among the opportunities available to this program? Be SPECIFIC

The Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department sets priorities based on the risk to the natural resource(s), the needs of the conservation and open space system and the funding available. Those natural resources that are at greater risk of degradation or loss become the highest priorities. The needs in the system and the funding available provide the ranking for those priorities.

3. Tell the Council how you define “science-based strategic planning”

Science based strategic planning allows decisions regarding natural resources to be made based on in-depth studies that evaluate and assess state and local resources to provide direction or recommendations on the protection, restoration or enhancement of those resources.

The science based strategic planning for this project is based on the in-depth studies used to develop the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan; Cedar Creek Conservation Corridor Strategic Plan; Metropolitan Conservation Corridors Plan; Anoka County Comprehensive Open Space Plan; and Anoka Conservation District Open Space Plan.

D. PROGRAM DETAILS:

1. The Work

a. Enumerate the specific kinds of action you plan to take to protect, enhance, and/or restore natural systems.

The action to be taken will be the acquisition of 550 acres of prairie, wetlands, forest and shoreline along the Rum River and Cedar Creek.

b. What species will be helped?

Existing non-agricultural land on the site is recognized by the MNDNR as a high quality ecologically diverse corridor along two major greenways, the Rum River and Cedar Creek. With the acquisition, this corridor would be protected and enhanced to increase the number of species and make it easier for species to move throughout the Rum River and Cedar Creek corridors.

After acquisition, the County proposes to restore approximately 250 acres of the 550 acres to a prairie/grassland habitat. The ecological restoration plan will include restoring the forests, wetlands and prairies. Restoration work will include

introducing over 30 species of native grasses, sedges, and forbs to restore dry, mesic and wet prairie habitats. In addition, the existing high quality fens, wet meadows, shrub swamps and oak savannas will be managed to sustain their high quality value. Restoring and enhancing the land back to its native habitat will help provide the necessary habitat needed to support a diverse variety of wildlife.

The acquisition of these parcels will protect 550 acres of habitat at the confluence of the Rum River and Cedar Creek. There is approximately 1-1/2 miles of shoreline along the Rum River and about 3/4 of a mile of the Cedar Creek that runs through the property. The Rum River provides angling access opportunities for some of the most sought after game fish, such as walleye, northern pike, and small mouth bass; the river provides exceptional fisheries habitat for these game fish.

As future funding is available, restoration of the flood plain and riparian edges along the Rum River and Cedar Creek will enhance habitat and cover for white tail deer, wild turkeys and migratory waterfowl.

c. Do you currently have the capacity to get the work done that you are requesting dollars for in FY 2011? -- Explain

The Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department is a governmental agency that currently manages a large natural resource based open space system throughout the County. The County has the budget, equipment and staff with the expertise to manage this project and the on-going restoration maintenance required.

2. Program Work Location

- a. What percent of your work will be prairie? 22%**
- b. What percent of your work will be wetland? 42%**
- c. What percent of your work will be forest? 22%**
- d. What percent of your work will be aquatic systems? 14%**
- e. Is it part of a larger habitat complex? If yes BRIEFLY describe the complex.**

The project is part of a larger habitat complex that creates a conservation corridor from the University of Minnesota's Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve, along Cedar Creek to the Rum River. The greenway consists of the following natural community types:

- Dry Oak Savanna
- Oak Forest
- Mixed Hardwood Swamp
- Shrub Swamp
- Wet Meadow/Rich Fen

Other species, such as Blandings Turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*), Sandhill Cranes (*Grus Canadensis*) and Halberd-leaved Tearthumb (*Polygonum arifolium*) are present in the area.

Cedar Creek and the Rum River also provides spawning habitat for northern pike, walleyes, and small mouth bass.

The project area is identified in the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan as a site of high biodiversity value based on the Minnesota County Biological Survey. In addition, the project area scored high in the areas of integrated terrestrial value and integrated aquatic habitat quality.

3. How We Plan to Use the Funds Requested

a. What percent reduction could you accept without rendering your project inoperable?

0%

b. Have you also applied to the Outdoor Heritage Fund Conservation Partners Grant Program operated by DNR?

No

c. Where else might you get money for this project?

There are no known resources at this time.

4. Personnel Details

a. Describe the personnel duties. Are they office staff or field staff – existing or new positions?

N/A