

Main Request for Funding Form

**Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Fiscal Year 2013**

Program or Project Title: Metro Big Rivers Habitat Phase 3

Funds Requested: \$ 8,453,310

Manager's Name: Deborah Loon

Organization: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.

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Organization Web Site: www.mnvalleytrust.org

County Locations: Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Sibley, Washington, Wright

Ecological Planning Regions:

- ☐ Northern Forest ☐ Forest/Prairie Transition ☐ Southeast Forest
☐ Prairie ☒ Metro/Urban

Activity Type:

- ☒ Protect - Fee ☒ Protect - Easement ☐ Protect - Other
☒ Restore ☒ Enhance

Priority Resources addressed by activity:

- ☒ Wetlands ☒ Forests ☒ Prairie ☒ Habitat

Project Abstract

Metro Big Rivers Phase 3 will protect 1,177 acres, restore 15 acres and enhance 477 acres of priority habitat within the big rivers corridors in the Metropolitan Urbanizing Area.

Project Narrative

Design and scope of work

In this third program phase, Metro Big Rivers will permanently protect 1,177 acres, restore 15 acres and enhance 477 acres of high quality wildlife habitat and fisheries in the Metropolitan Urbanizing Section with Outdoor Heritage Funds. Using other leveraged funds, the partners will protect at least 232 additional acres, for a total of 1,409 acres protected in the three river corridors in the Metro Urbanizing Section.

Metro Big Rivers will meet two LSOHC priorities for the Metro Urbanizing Section:

- Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi and St. Croix rivers
- Protect, enhance and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests and oak savanna with an emphasis on areas with high biological diversity.

The partners of Metro Big Rivers program are five established and experienced conservation organizations – Friends of the Mississippi River, Great River Greening, Minnesota Land Trust, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc., and the Trust for Public Land. Each of these organizations has a solid track record completing the type of work proposed, both independently and collaboratively. Their proposed work is described below.

Priorities are set by the partners to meet the plans discussed in the next section of this proposal and in collaboration with the governmental agencies that will be the final stewards, where applicable. Partner-specific prioritization is included in the following project descriptions.

Friends of the Mississippi River will restore 14 acres and enhance 276 acres on five sites in Dakota and Washington Counties.

The Twin Cities Metropolitan Urbanizing Area contains significant and critical wildlife habitat. However, because of intensive land cover and use changes that have occurred over the years, much of this habitat is under threat. Several years ago, Dakota and Washington Counties made conscious decisions to protect as much of their natural areas and habitat as possible and created land conservation programs. Friends of the Mississippi River has been a steadfast partner in these effort, bringing protection projects to the programs and conducting restoration and enhancement activities on hundreds of acres of protected land.

In this phase of Metro Big Rivers, FMR will conduct restoration and enhancement activities at one site in Washington County and four sites within Dakota County. All of these sites were identified as being ecologically important by separate and independent science-based planning processes that involved public input.

The sites and projects are described below. All sites in Dakota County are connected to other important natural areas, build on existing restoration projects, and are within the Metropolitan

Conservation Corridors. The Washington County site was identified as an important site by the City of Cottage Grove and during the development of the Washington County Conservation Plan. It provides important habitat in the Mississippi River corridor.

- Gores Pool Wildlife Management Area - Freitag Tract. FMR will enhance 10 acres of wet meadow and 110 acres of forest, continuing the important restoration and enhancement activities at this site. This state-owned WMA / AMA was identified in numerous local and state plans as ecologically significant and as a priority to protect (the City of Hastings Greenway Plan, the Mississippi River Greenway Plan, the Dakota County Farmland and Natural Area Plan, Metro Conservation Corridors and by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources).

Gores Pool WMA is a 6,449-acre complex of floodplain forest, marshland and backwater along the Mississippi River and Vermillion River Bottoms. Most of the area is designated as outstanding biodiversity significance and constitutes one of the largest expanses of floodplain native plant communities in southeast Minnesota. It is also one of the top four sites in the state for rare forest birds.

The 300-acre Freitag Tract was purchased in 2008 by the DNR in partnership with Dakota County and the City of Hastings. FMR completed a Natural Resource Management Plan and has begun working with the DNR's Area Wildlife Manager on habitat restoration and enhancement activities on 70 acres. This site is within .5 mile of the enhancement project at the Hastings SNA (below).

- Hastings Sand Coulee SNA. FMR will restore 4 acres of prairie, enhance 30 acres of prairie by removing woody species and conducting prescribed burns, and enhance 42 acres of oak forest by controlling exotic invasive species and conducting prescribed burns.

This site contains an intermittent stream that flows to the Vermillion River, rare dry prairie and associated oak woodland. Fourteen rare species have been documented at this SNA. These restoration and enhancement activities will provide additional high quality habitat for the rare species at the site, as well as plant and animal species that are members of this natural community.

In 2011, 185 acres were added to this SNA. The City of Hastings and Dakota County supported these DNR acquisitions and support the ongoing restoration efforts at the site. FMR completed a Natural Resource Management Plan for this new area in 2011 in collaboration with the DNR. This SNA is within a Metro Conservation Corridor and identified as significant by the Dakota County Farmland and Natural Area Program and the County Biological Survey.

This project is part of a larger habitat protection and improvement effort in the vicinity, including the projects in this proposal at Hastings Sand Coulee SNA, Hastings SNA and the Old Mill Park site.

- Hastings Scientific and Natural Area. FMR will enhance 30 acres of forest by conducting exotic invasive plant control at this SNA. These activities will improve the habitat for the rare species and all the plant and animal members of these forest communities.

This 69-acre SNA, designated in the 1970s, is situated along the Mississippi –Vermillion River floodplain and bluffs in Hastings. It contains wetland, maple-basswood forest and

floodplain forest. It is within a Metro Conservation Corridor and the Mississippi River Greenway and identified as ecologically significant by the Dakota County Farmland and Natural Area Program and the County Biological Survey. This proposal was developed and submitted with support of the DNR-SNA staff. FMR developed a Natural Resource Management Plan for this SNA in 2011.

This site-specific project is part of a larger habitat protection and improvement effort in the vicinity. It is 1 mile away from the Hastings Sand Coulee SNA, within .5 miles from the Gores Pool Wildlife Management area and about .25 miles from the Old Mill Park site.

- City of Hastings – Vermillion River Parks (Old Mill, Vermillion Falls & Vermillion Linear). FMR will restore 10 acres of prairie, and enhance 8 acres of existing prairie and 12 acres of forest, thereby improving habitat and water quality along approximately 1.5 miles of the Vermillion River. This stretch of the Vermillion River contains areas identified as ecologically significant by the Dakota County Farmland and Natural Area Program and the County Biological Survey. It is located within the Mississippi River Greenway and the Metro Conservation Corridors.

FMR is proposing to first develop a Natural Resource Management Plan for the project site. This plan will provide the details needed to begin the restoration activities. However, based on the existing communities and the city's goals, FMR anticipates achieving the above acreage goals. The proposed activities will improve the habitat values of these parks and enhance their role as a habitat corridor allowing movement of wildlife. This proposal was developed in collaboration with the City of Hastings.

This specific project is part of a larger habitat protection and improvement effort in the vicinity. It is 1 mile away from the Hastings Sand Coulee SNA, within .5 miles of the Hastings SNA. In addition, FMR, the DNR and Dakota County are focusing their efforts on protecting and improving the habitat qualities of this river in Dakota County. There are a number of other ongoing conservation projects upstream from this site.

- Gateway North Open Space Area – Cottage Grove. FMR intends to conduct woody plant removal and a prescribed burn on approximately 4-acres of prairie and exotic plant control on approximately 30 acres of forest.

Gateway North Open Space Area is a 34-acre site that sits on a high ancient river terrace of sandstone and limestone within Cottage Grove. In 1998, a Natural Resources Inventory was completed for the city, finding high diversity and natural resource quality. In addition, this site was identified and highlighted during the Washington County Conservation Plan process, completed in 2010. The site is owned by the City of Cottage Grove and permanently protected by conservation easement held by the Minnesota Land Trust. The natural communities located on this site include oak forest, bedrock bluff prairie and lowland hardwood forest.

Early in 2013, FMR will complete a Natural Resource Management Plan for the site. Both the City of Cottage Grove and the Minnesota Land Trust are aware that this plan is being developed. This plan will provide the specific restoration and enhancement activities that will be employed to improve the habitat at this site. However, it is known that the prairie is being encroached upon by woody plants and exotic invasive plant species have become established in the forest.

Great River Greening (GRG) will work at Springbrook Nature Center and Fish Creek Open Space to enhance 201 acres of native prairie, oak savanna, oak woodland, and oak forest habitat, and restore 1 acre of oak woodland. Work will be as follows:

- Springbrook Nature Center is a 127-acre parcel containing native, undisturbed prairie, oak savanna, oak woodland and wetlands. Located less than a mile from the Mississippi River along a woodland corridor, Springbrook is a major stopping point for migrating birds in the Mississippi flyway. It was one of Minnesota Audubon Society's first eight designated Important Bird Areas, and is a Breeding Bird Atlas primary survey block. In addition to birds, Springbrook is home to western hog-nosed snakes, bull snakes, and Blanding's turtles (state SGCN species). The land was purchased by the City of Fridley in the early 1970's with LAWCON funds and must be kept as natural land in perpetuity. Approximately 200,000 visitors use the site annually.

Native prairie and oak savanna habitats are among the most critically imperiled ecological systems in Minnesota. In addition, their extent in the Metropolitan Area is considerably reduced relative to historic time. Springbrook is a key remnant located along the Mississippi River Corridor in the northern Twin Cities. Encroachment by exotic and woody species and loss of natural fire regimes are having a significant impact on the habitats at Springbrook Nature Center.

In collaboration with the City of Fridley, GRG will enhance 77 acres of native prairie, oak savanna and oak woodland habitat at Springbrook using invasive woody and exotic species management and prescribed fire. GRG will design and begin implementation of a robust prescribed fire program across the majority of the site; this will continue as a regular component of the site's management going forward. The partners will engage and expand the existing volunteer base to assist in carrying out facets of these activities. In addition, the nature center will use this opportunity to educate local citizens (including city officials) about habitat enhancement activities.

- Fish Creek Open Space is a 175-acre open space, with another 70 acres being acquired; the site includes 80 acres of river bluffland along the Mississippi River with steep slopes and dramatic vistas, and over 125 acres of nearly contiguous oak communities. The site is the heart of the Fish Creek Natural Area Greenway, which includes an additional 150 acres of protected land.

Once the 70 acre addition is in public ownership, GRG in collaboration with Ramsey County and City of Maplewood will enhance 124 acres of oak communities by removing buckthorn and other invasive species; conduct a prescribed burn on 60 of these acres; remove 2 acres of pine plantations, and restore oak woodland by erecting deer exclosure fencing and planting oak trees in a 1 acre forest canopy gap. All enhancement and restoration actions will occur on public land.

All enhancement actions will occur on public land. Significant city, county and federal/state LAWCON funding (and those from others sources) has been spent in acquiring these properties and providing for habitat enhancement activities for the benefit of the state's wildlife resources. GRG is working to ensure that the public's investment in this important land is maintained indefinitely. Accomplishing this goal requires that funds are brought to bear from a variety of sources, that connections to local communities are built and maintained, and that resources are used effectively and efficiently. Initiating a robust restoration and enhancement plan at this point

(when challenges are relatively small) will reduce the long-term cost of ongoing management, and lay the stage for effective, cost-efficient ongoing management of the site.

Project partners have committed to maintaining the investment put forward through OHF funds. In addition, Great River Greening will work with City of Fridley, Springbrook Nature Center, Springbrook Nature Center Foundation, City of Maplewood, Ramsey County Parks and other partners to further elevate the restoration and enhancement of the site's natural resources, and will work to ensure this investment is maintained and added upon.

When prioritizing projects for restoration and enhancement action, GRG considers the following criteria:

- Presence of MCBS quality ecological system(s) and/or concentration of SGCN/T&E species (weighted heavily) – indicators of the long-term viability of species/systems (habitat condition, size and landscape context) and conservation efficiency.
- Size of habitat block or managed area – one indicator of long-term viability.
- Occurrence within DNR mapped habitat corridors – an indicator of potential for restoring/conserving important habitat connectivity between protected areas.
- Public lands or private lands with long-term easements – a predictor of conservation success and security of investment.
- Multiple conservation benefits to both game and non-game species and other natural resources – an indicator of conservation efficiency.
- Immediacy of need/action as determined by Minnesota County Biological Survey and other sources – an indicator of conservation urgency.
- Ability to effectively manage lands over the long term through established means – an indicator of conservation capability of potential partner.
- Likelihood of long-term success
- Cost and feasibility
- Long-term benefit to wildlife.

The Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) will acquire 3 to 5 perpetual conservation easements on at least 250 acres of high priority habitat in the Crow River and St. Croix River corridors.

The Twin Cities Metropolitan Urbanizing Area is bracketed by two important habitat corridors: the Crow River, a tributary of the Mississippi River, on the west side and the St. Croix River on the east. These river corridors provide important habitat for migratory birds and waterfowl. The rivers themselves provide nesting, spawning, and other habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial animals. Both are popular for fishing, canoeing and boating.

But in the past two decades, these high quality river corridors have been under heavy threat of development and fragmentation. With this grant, the Minnesota Land Trust will expand its efforts to protect riparian habitat and critical linkages between important areas of core habitat. These linkages contain a mosaic of Big Woods, wetland, and grassland habitats.

Activities under this grant include:

- Contact and negotiate with interested landowners
- Draft and complete 3-5 perpetual conservation easements protecting a minimum of 250 acres of land
- Document property conditions and requiring habitat management plans as appropriate

- Dedicate funds for the perpetual monitoring, management and enforcement of those easements.

This project will build on MLT's experience and more than 20 permanent conservation easements already in place within these two corridors. It also builds on the significant public investment in habitat protection in these areas, which includes several WMAs, State Parks, and several county parks.

MLT works only with conservation easements that are perpetual. The easements will prohibit land uses and development that negatively affect important habitat and other conservation values. The easements also will require habitat management plans as appropriate, and direct the use of native vegetation in any required restoration. The easements are monitored annually and enforced as necessary under MLT's comprehensive conservation easement stewardship program funded in part through our Stewardship and Enforcement Fund.

The Land Trust will prioritize existing and future potential parcels for protection using the following criteria, in this order of importance:

- Habitat: quality and quantity of existing habitat on site
- Context: proximity and relationship to other protected lands
- Opportunity: determine which landowners will participate now
- Other Benefits: meeting multiple objectives, including visual and physical access, water quality, etc.

The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. (MVT) will acquire fee title to 600 acres of high priority lands along the Minnesota River to expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge between Chaska and LeSueur. The Trust will acquire 150 additional acres with other non-state funds, for a combined total of 750 acres.

The Refuge expansion units have been prioritized by the USFWS in its *Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District*. Priorities were identified through a science-based, public planning process as having strong potential to provide high quality habitat for wildlife and opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation.

All prioritized lands are along the Minnesota River and include river frontage, floodplain and cropland. Following acquisition, the Trust and USFWS will develop a restoration and management plan, then restore and enhance the floodplain forest, wetlands and prairie. Cropland will be retired and drain tile broken.

This project's fee acquisition and subsequent habitat restoration and enhancement will reduce fragmentation, combat habitat loss, protect native plant and animal species, improve water quality of the Minnesota River and increase public access for wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting and fishing.

This project will provide quality habitat for migrant and resident wildlife species, protect the diversity of native ecosystems, and continue to improve ecosystem connectivity and resilience. It will increase breeding and migratory habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, Neotropical migrants, and other species including non-migratory resident species. This project also will improve water quality by retiring and restoring croplands in the Minnesota River Valley to the natural habitats of floodplain forest, wetlands and prairie. And it will expand the public's access to lands in and

near the Twin Cities for wildlife-dependent recreational activities, such as birding, photography, hiking, interpretation, hunting and fishing.

The lands acquired will be donated to the USFWS for perpetual management for wildlife and wildlife-dependent recreation as part of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) will protect using fee title acquisition 327 acres of floodplain forest, wetland, oak savanna, and prairie habitat along the Minnesota, Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers and key tributaries. TPL will protect another 82 acres with leveraged dollars, for total protection of 409 acres of high quality habitat.

Six prospective projects are described below. All have high quality habitat along the three Big River Corridors that TPL's public partners have identified as high priority and immediate opportunities to protect. The state conservation plans and priorities are referenced in parentheses.

TPL will achieve the acreage targets from among these projects and will not complete all of them with the grant. Projects will be prioritized based on completed due diligence, landowner objectives and needs, timing of leverage funds and other issues that may effect how quickly a project area can move to closure.

In the Minnesota River Corridor:

- Protect 98 acres at Savage Fen Natural Area along the Minnesota River, adjacent to existing protected land and including wetland and associated upland forest. ("Key habitats" identified in the Big Woods subsection of the SWAP)

Protect 30 acres at Pike Lake Natural Area with lakeshore, wetland, and habitat for fish, game and wildlife. ("Key habitats" identified in the Big Woods subsection of the SWAP)

- Protect up to 1000 acres to expand the Upgrala Unit of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. This tract contains wetland, floodplain forest, over one mile of Minnesota River shoreline, two shallow lakes and a small stream. The high quality wetlands provide excellent waterfowl habitat and outstanding hunting and fishing opportunities in the heart of the metropolitan area. This parcel will be acquired in collaboration with the Minnesota Valley Trust and US Fish and Wildlife Service. (*Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District.*)

In the Mississippi River Corridor:

- Protect up to 170 acres of shoreland, forest and wetland habitat on the Wild and Scenic Rum River just a few miles upstream of the Mississippi River (a "key river reach" identified in the Anoka Sand Plain subsection of the SWAP)

In the St. Croix River Corridor:

- Protect up to 200 acres of forest in the Franconia/ Scandia St. Croix River corridor, complementing existing protected lands along the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway ("key river reach" identified in the Mille Lacs Upland subsection);

- Protect up to 1000 acres of forest and associated wetlands / prairie at Big Marine Lake in the St. Croix Greenway (in the St. Paul – Baldwin Plains and Moraines).

Planning

The Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan cites habitat loss and degradation as critical problems statewide. The State Wildlife Action Plan notes these problems in the specific ecological subsections here: Big Woods, Anoka Sand Plain, Mille Lacs Uplands, St. Paul – Baldwin Plains and Moraines, and Oak Savanna.

In identifying and selecting projects for this Outdoor Heritage Fund proposal, the Metro Big Rivers partnership utilizes a science-based approach and applies the following key habitat priorities of the *Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan*:

- Protect priority habitat
- Protect critical shorelands
- Improve connectivity and access to outdoor recreation
- Restore land, wetlands, and wetland-associated watersheds
- Protect and restore critical in-water habitat of lakes and streams
- Keep water on the landscape.

Specific to “improving connectivity and access to outdoor recreation,” Metro Big Rivers works to improve and expand new hunting, fishing and other wildlife-based recreational opportunities close to home for the 3,000,000 Minnesotans who lives in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. These opportunities will help to build a new generation of Minnesotans who love to hunt, fish, bird-watch, or study wildlife.

Metro Big Rivers also implements specific habitat priorities in the State Wildlife Action Plan (*Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare: An Action Plan for Minnesota Wildlife*.) supports several species occurrences documented in the DNR's *Minnesota County Biological Survey Heritage Database*, and implements recommendations from various species-specific plans (e.g., *Long Term Duck Recovery Plan*).

Metro Big Rivers projects also are supported and often identified in location-specific plans, including the following:

- Dakota County Farmland and Natural Area Protection Plan, Mississippi River Greenway Strategic Plan & Northern Dakota County Greenway Plan.
- Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District.
- Scott County Land Protection Plan and St. Croix River Association Land Protection Plan.
- St. Croix River Watershed Conservation Priorities Report and Washington County Land and Water Legacy Program Conservation Priorities Plan.

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds

This proposal to LSOHC for Outdoor Heritage Fund support does not supplant any other sources of funds. In all cases, this proposal and the projects to be completed accelerate habitat work in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

All Metro Big Rivers partners also are partners in the Metropolitan Conservation Corridors (MeCC), which has been receiving grants from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) since 2005.

The Minnesota Valley Trust's leverage will come from other, non-state funding sources, potentially including private, nonprofit funds and federal funds. The Trust for Public Land's projects may require other state funding sources to successfully complete the fee title acquisition priority projects identified herein. The other funding sources may include ENRTF / LCCMR as part of the MECC program; LCCMR or bonding appropriated to DNR's SNA, AMA/WMA programs; RIM; funding from the clean water fund and parks / trails fund; local and metropolitan natural areas funding, as appropriate; and, private funds.

Relationship to Current Organizational Budget

The OHF grant funds will be used exclusively to complete -- and are necessary for -- the proposed project activities, thereby accelerating the protection, restoration and enhancement of high priority habitat in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The grant funds are in addition to the organizational operating budget of each partner and other funds secured for habitat work. These grant funds will not substitute for or supplant other funding sources.

Sustainability and Maintenance

From its inception in 1998, Friends of the Mississippi River's Land Conservation Program has focused its efforts in Dakota and Washington County. This focus is not anticipated to change. FMR is committed to restoring and enhancing the sites presented in this proposal, then continuing to manage, improve and expand them into the future, as well. These sites play an important role in FMR's effort to improve the Mississippi River ecosystem in the Twin Cities area.

FMR will work with the landowner -- DNR or a local unit of government -- to ensure that the following post-grant activities take place.

- Site monitoring -- Monitoring every 1-2 years will include plant and animal surveys, specifically evaluating the treatments implemented during the grant period.
- Enhancement and Management -- Based on the information obtained during these monitoring visits, agency or FMR staff will initiate actions to address emerging threats or to continue longer treatment regimes. Specific future activities will necessarily be dictated by data obtained from the monitoring protocol.

Before restoration or enhancement activities are initiated under this grant, FMR will ensure that a Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) is in place for each site. FMR's NRMPs contain information on historical and current conditions of the site, plant survey lists, problems/issues, goals, recommendations, timelines and costs. By the beginning of 2012, NRMPs will have been developed for four of the sites. The initial activity for the Vermillion River Parks project under this grant will be to develop a NRMP.

Great River Greening is committed to working with Springbrook Nature Center and Ramsey County on an on-going basis to identify and procure financial resources for maintaining these

improvements as needed, bring volunteers to bear, and otherwise assist in reducing the financial and capacity burden in the face of fiscal constraints. A natural resource management plan will be developed for the sites to guide effective long-term management. Springbrook, the City of Fridley, and Ramsey County are committed to the long-term maintenance of these habitat improvements in line with prescribed actions.

Springbrook and Ramsey County staff will monitor the site and take any necessary actions to sustain the habitat improvements as part of their public land management responsibilities. Maintenance work will be carried out by existing staff, CCM crews, volunteers, temporary project staffing or through vendor contracting. Periodic enhancements (beyond routine management) will be funded through annual funding requests from a variety of funding sources, including bonding, gifts, federal and other sources.

The land protected by the Minnesota Land Trust through conservation easements will be sustained through the best standards and practices for conservation easement stewardship. The Minnesota Land Trust is a nationally-accredited land trust with a very successful stewardship program that includes annual property monitoring, effective records management, addressing inquiries and interpretations, tracking changes in ownership, investigating potential violations and defending the easement in case of a true violation. Funding for these easement stewardship activities is included in the project budget.

Lands acquired by the Minnesota Valley Trust for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge will be maintained by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Initial restoration and enhancement activities will be completed by MVT prior to transferring ownership of the property to the USFWS.

The Trust for Public Land will work with experienced local, state and federal land programs, citizen groups and private landowners to ensure that the acquired lands are able to be restored and stewarded for habitat and the public use. Each protected area will have a restoration and management plan including source and use of funds for these stewardship activities over time. With a strong record of leveraging funds to protect, restore and enhance wildlife habitat in the metro area, TPL is committed to working with the long term land stewards to secure the resources need to maintain these lands in the long term.

Outcomes

Friends of the Mississippi River:

All sites included in this program were chosen because they 1) provide or have the potential to provide significant habitat, and 2) have experienced changes over time that have reduced their ecological functions or health. One outcome of this project is to reverse these changes, thereby improving and restoring the health and diversity of these natural communities. Another outcome is to maintain or improve the conditions required to maintain populations of the rare species found at these sites.

Short-term and Intermediate Outcomes:

- Significantly enhanced habitat conditions across 42 acres of prairie, 224 acres of forest and 10 acres of wet meadow.
- Restored habitat conditions over 14 acres of prairie.
- > 90% reduction in woody invasive exotic species within forest.

- Enhanced diversity in prairie and forest habitats through invasive plant control and the use of prescribed burns.
- Improve habitat conditions required to maintain populations of rare species found at these sites.

Long-term Outcomes:

- Increased high quality habitat usage by SGCN reptile and mammal species, migratory and breeding birds.
- Maintain habitat conditions required to maintain populations of rare species found at these sites.
- Sustained control of exotic invasive plant species.

Great River Greening:

Short-term and Intermediate Outcomes:

- Significantly enhanced habitat conditions (measured by percent reduction in invasive species, diversity of flora, occupation of and diversity of animal species) across 189 acres of oak woodland and 13 acres of native prairie and oak savanna habitat.
- >95% reduction in woody invasive exotic species (Siberian elm, buckthorn, honeysuckle, etc.).
- Enhanced diversity and structure in native prairie, oak savanna and oak woodland habitats stemming from invasive species control and prescribed fire (relative to MCBS benchmarks).

Long-term Outcomes:

- Significantly enhanced habitat conditions across 189 acres of oak woodland and 13 acres of native prairie and oak savanna habitat, providing two key habitat cores within the Mississippi River corridor of the Twin Cities.
- Sustained >95% reduction in woody invasive exotic species (Siberian elm, buckthorn, honeysuckle, etc.) and 80% reduction in seed bank over first 10 years.
- Increased usage of forest/savanna/prairie habitat by migratory and breeding birds during respective seasons.
- Increased populations of SGCN reptile and mammal species resulting from improvements in habitat condition.
- Establishment of primary grounds for strong public educational program tied to the value of high quality habitat in maintaining wildlife populations.

Minnesota Land Trust

Key Outcomes:

- Protection of key parcels within two river corridors so that a network of natural land habitats will connect, making corridors for wildlife and species in greatest need of conservation
- High quality aquatic habitat will be achieved by protection of vegetative buffers along riparian areas

Minnesota Valley Trust:

Key Outcomes:

- 750 acres of permanently protected high quality wetland, forest, prairie and aquatic habitat along the Minnesota River corridor of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Urbanizing Area.

- Retired cropland, where applicable, and restored habitat conditions to reduce fragmentation, provide quality habitat for migrant and resident wildlife species, protect the diversity of native ecosystems, continue to improve ecosystem connectivity and resilience and improve water quality of the Minnesota River.
- Increased public access for wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting and fishing.

Trust for Public Land:

Short-term and Intermediate Outcomes:

- Up to 409 acres of permanently protected high quality wetland, forest, prairie and aquatic habitat within the Minnesota, St. Croix and Mississippi River corridors in the metropolitan urbanizing area.

Long-term Outcomes:

- Significantly restored habitat conditions on up to 409 acres of wetland, forest, prairie and aquatic habitat -- very near or adjacent to "nodes" of already protected natural lands -- within the Minnesota, St. Croix and Mississippi River corridors of the metropolitan urbanizing area. Increased high quality habitat usage by SGCN reptile and mammal species, migratory and breeding birds during respective seasons, and other fish and wildlife species in the metropolitan urbanizing area.
- A stronger more diverse group of permanent land stewards working collectively to protect, enhance and restore habitat throughout the Twin Cities region and the state of Minnesota.
- Increased usage of protected habitat lands in and near the three river corridors for outdoor recreation and education purposes so important in areas near the Twin Cities population.

Activity Type Detail

Fee Acquisition Projects

☒ **Yes** ☐ No, please explain ☐ not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Is the land you plan to acquire free of any other permanent protection?

☒ **Yes** ☐ No, please explain ☐ not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Easement Acquisition Projects

Will the eased land be open for public use?

☐ **Yes** ☒ No, please explain ☐ not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Although public access is not the primary goal of this conservation easement work, MLT will explore the potential for public access with landowners on a case-by-case basis. In addition, some potential projects are adjacent to public waters, where anglers will be able to fish along the protected shoreline. Finally, it is not uncommon that the lands under conservation easement become open to the public in the future as the ownership changes. In fact, nearly 20% of MLT's existing conservation easements have public or semi-public access.

Will the conservation easement be permanent?

☒ Yes ☐ No, please explain ☐ not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Restoration and Enhancement Projects

Is the activity on permanently protected land and/or public waters?

☒ Yes ☐ No, please explain ☐ not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Does the activity take place on an Aquatic Management Area (AMA), Scientific and Natural Area (SNA), Wildlife Management Area (WMA), or State Forests?

☒ Yes, which ones ☐ No, please explain ☐ not applicable

If so, please indicate which ones:

Gores Pool Wildlife Management Area, Hastings Sand Coulee SNA and the Hastings SNA. In addition, three sites (Springbrook Nature Center, Vermillion River Parks & Gateway North Open Space Area) are owned and managed by local units of government.

Past Outdoor Heritage Fund Appropriations Received for this program

ML 2009	ML 2010	ML 2011
\$ 0	\$ 2,397,000	\$ 5,000,000 (pending legislative approval)

Accomplishment Timeline

Friends of Mississippi River

Activity	Milestone	Date
Development of NRMP for Vermillion River Parks Project	Natural Resource Management Plan completed	2/1/2013
Wet meadow enhancement	10 acres of wet meadow treated to control exotic invasive plants.	12/31/2014
Forest enhancement	Complete exotic invasive plant control and prescribed burns on 100 acres of forest	12/31/2014
Forest enhancement	Complete exotic invasive plant control and prescribed burns on 124 acres of forest	6/30/2015
Prairie Enhancement	Remove woody plants & conduct prescribed burn on 42 acres of existing prairie	12/31/2014
Prairie Restoration	14 acres of Prairie seed installed	12/31/2014

Great River Greening

Activity	Milestone	Date
Development of natural resource management plans for Springbrook Nature Center and Fish Creek Open Space	Natural Resource management plans completed	1/1/2013
Prairie enhancement	Prescribed fire over 13 acres completed.	6/1/2015
Prairie enhancement	Woody invasive and exotic species removal over 13 acres completed.	5/1/2014
Oak woodland enhancement	Woody invasive removal completed over 188 acres	5/1/2014
Oak woodland reconstruction	Deer exclosure fencing and oak trees installed on 1 ac forest gap	6/1/2015
Oak woodland enhancement	Prescribed fire over 72 acres completed	6/1/2015

Minnesota Land Trust

Activity	Milestone	Date
Acquire conservation easements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify landowners Negotiate, draft, complete easements 	Protect 250 acres by completing 3-5 conservation easements	June 2014

• Dedicate funds for easement stewardship		
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Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.

Activity	Milestone	Date
Appraisal, landowner negotiations, purchase agreement(s)	Complete on 300 acres	February 2013
Title review and commitment	Complete	May 2013
Closing(s)	Closing(s)	June 2013
Appraisal, landowner negotiations, purchase agreement(s)	Complete on 300 acres	February 2014
Title review and commitment	Complete	May 2014
Closing(s)	Closing(s)	June 2014

Trust for Public Land

Activity	Milestone	Date
Landowner negotiations	Complete landowner neg./agreements 1 st parcels	October 2012
Restoration / stewardship planning	Complete steward planning for restoration, mgmt, use	February 2013
Due diligence	Complete due diligence	August 2013
Closing	Closing 1 st parcels – 200 acres	October 2013
Landowner negotiations	Complete landowner neg./agreements 2 nd parcels	April 2013
Restoration / stewardship planning	Complete steward planning for restoration, mgt, use	August 2013
Due diligence	Complete due diligence	October 2013
Closing	Closing 2nd parcels – 209 acres	February 2014

Name of Proposal:

Date:

Metro Big Rivers Habitat Phase 3

15-Jul-11

[Link HERE to definitions of the budget items below.](#)

Total Amount of Request \$ 8,453,310 From page 1 on the funding form.

Personnel

Position breakdown here	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Conservation Director (FMR)	0.02	3	\$ 5,760			\$ 5,760
Ecologist/Project Coordinator (FMR)	0.09	3	\$ 18,880			\$ 18,880
Ecologist (FMR)	0.09	3	\$ 17,430			\$ 17,430
Accountant/bookkeeper (FMR)	0.006	3	\$ 1,440			\$ 1,440
Proj. Manager/Ecologist (GRG)	0.7	3	\$ 34,500	\$ 19,500	Allely, Springbrook Fnd	\$ 54,000
Volunteer Manager (GRG)	0.01	3	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	Allely, Springbrook Fnd	\$ 6,000
Dir. Cons. Programs (GRG)	0.02	3	\$ 13,900	\$ 1,500	City of Maplewood	\$ 15,400
Ecology Staff (GRG)	0	3	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	City of Maplewood	\$ 4,000
Business Staff (GRG)	0.03	3	\$ 13,700	\$ -	City of Maplewood	\$ 13,700
Conservation Staff (MLT)	0.75	2	\$ 70,000			\$ 70,000
Legal Staff (MLT)	0.2	2	\$ 25,000			\$ 25,000
Total	1.92		\$ 205,610	\$ 26,000	\$ -	\$ 231,610

Budget and Cash Leverage (All your LSOHC Request Funds must be direct to and necessary for program outcomes.)

Please describe how you intend to spend the requested funds.

Budget Item	Anticipated Cash		Cash Leverage Source		Total
	LSOHC Request	Leverage			
Personnel - auto entered from above	\$ 205,610	\$ 26,000	\$ -	\$	231,610
Contracts	\$ 910,900			\$	910,900
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT (breakout in table 7)	\$ 2,746,800	\$ 686,700	local, state, federal	\$	3,433,500
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT (breakout in table 7)	\$ 3,177,200	\$ 794,300	private, local, state, fe	\$	3,971,500
Easement Acquisition	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 500,000	donated easement val	\$	1,750,000
Easement Stewardship	\$ 85,000			\$	85,000
Travel (in-state)	\$ 4,050			\$	4,050
Professional Services	\$ 60,000			\$	60,000
Direct Support Services				\$	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs (\$3,500 per acquisition)	\$ 7,000			\$	7,000
Other				\$	6,750
Capital Equipment (auto entered from below)				\$	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$ 2,000			\$	2,000
Supplies/Materials	\$ 4,750			\$	4,750
	\$ 8,453,310	\$ 2,007,000	\$ -	\$	10,460,310

Capital Equipment (single items over \$10,000 - auto entered into table above)

Item Name	LSOHC Request	Leverage
None		
Total		-

Attachment B. Output Tables

Name of Proposal:	Metro Big Rivers Habitat Phase 3
Date:	15-Jul-11

Table 1 and Table 3 column totals should be the same AND Table 2 and Table 4 column totals should be the same

If your project has lakes or shoreline miles instead of land acres, convert miles to acres

for Tables 1 and 3 using the following conversion:

Lakeshore = 6 acres per lakeshore mile / Stream & River Shore = 12 acres per linear mile, if both sides

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Describe the scope of the project in acres (use conversion above if needed)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore		14	1		15
Protect Fee	96	67	115	649	927
Protect Easement				250	250
Protect Other					0
Enhance	10	42	425		477
Total	106	123	541	899	

Total Acres (sum of Total column)

1669

Total Acres (sum of Total row)

1669

These two cells
should be the same
figure.

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore		\$ 55,000	\$ 6,000		\$ 61,000
Protect Fee	\$ 1,020,000	\$ 975,000	\$ 1,365,000	\$ 2,564,000	\$ 5,924,000
Protect Easement				\$ 1,492,000	\$ 1,492,000
Protect Other					\$ -
Enhance	\$ 34,000	\$ 105,850	\$ 836,460		\$ 976,310
Total	\$ 1,054,000	\$ 1,135,850	\$ 2,207,460	\$ 4,056,000	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)

\$ 8,453,310

Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 8,453,310

Check to make sure this amount is the same

as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

These two cells
should be the same
figure.

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	15					15
Protect Fee	927					927
Protect Easement	250					250
Protect Other						0
Enhance	477					477
Total	1669	0	0	0	0	

Total Acres (sum of Total column)

1669

Total Acres (sum of Total row)

1669

Total Acres from Table 1.

1669

These three cells
should be the same
figure.

Attachment B. Output Tables

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$ 61,000					\$ 61,000
Protect Fee	\$ 5,924,000					\$ 5,924,000
Protect Easement	\$ 1,492,000					\$ 1,492,000
Protect Other						\$ -
Enhance	\$ 976,310					\$ 976,310
Total	\$ 8,453,310	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)

\$ 8,453,310

These two cells
should be the same
figure.

Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 8,453,310

Check to make sure these amounts are the same
as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

TBD # miles of Lakes / Streams / Rivers Shoreline

Table 6. Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in acres)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability	67	47	80	35	229
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	29	20	35	614	698
Permanent Easement PILT Liability				250	250
	96	67	115	899	

Table 7. Estimated Value of Land Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in dollars)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total	
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$ 714,000	\$ 682,500	\$ 955,500	\$ 394,800	\$ 2,746,800	#REF!
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$ 306,000	\$ 292,500	\$ 409,500	\$ 2,169,200	\$ 3,177,200	#REF!
Permanent Easement PILT Liability				\$ 1,250,000	\$ 1,250,000	#REF!
	\$ 1,020,000	\$ 975,000	\$ 1,365,000	\$ 3,814,000		

FTI: should
match total in
budget table
that is auto
entered below

Attachment C. Parcel List

Name of Proposal:

Metro Big Rivers Habitat Phase 3

Date:

15-Jul-11

County	Township	Range	Direction	Section	TRDS	# of acres	Budgetary Estimate (includes administrative, restoration or other related costs and do not include matching money contributed or earned by the transaction)	Description	Activity PF=Protect Fee PE=Protect Easement PO=Protect Other R=Restore E=Enhance	If Easement, what is the cost as a % of the fee acquisition?	Any existing protection? (yes/no)	Open to hunting and fishing? (yes/no)
Friends of the Mississippi River: are 2 with the exception of some areas of Cook County which is 1												
Parcel Name												
Friends of the Mississippi River:												
Gateway North Open Space Ar Washington	27	21	2	7 & 8	272127 & 272128	34	70,769	Enhancement of 30 acres of oak woodland and enhancement of 4 acres of prairie through control of exotic invasive plants and woody plants.	E		Yes	No
Hastings SNA	Dakota	115	17	2	27 & 35	11517227 & 11517235	30	68,689	Enhance 30 acres of forest through exotic invasive plant control.	E	Yes	No
Hastings Sand Coulee SNA	Dakota	114	17	2	2	1141722	76	161,979	Enhance 30 acres of prairie by removing woody plants and using prescribed burns. Enhance 42 acres of forest by controlling exotic invasive plants. We will also restore 4-acres of prairie.	E & R	Yes	No
Gores Pool WMA	Dakota	115	17	2	23 & 26	11517223 & 11517226	120	154,329	10 acres of wet meadow enhancement and 110 of forest enhancement, by controlling exotic invasive plants and by utilizing prescribed burns.	E & R	Yes	Yes
Vermillion River Parks	Dakota	115	17	2	33 & 34	11517233 & 11517234	30	72,049	Development of a Natural Resource Management Plan for the entire site. Enhancement of 8 acres of prairie and 12 acres of forest by controlling exotic invasive plants and by conducting prescribed burns.. Restoration of 10 acres of prairie.	E & R	Yes	No

Attachment C. Parcel List

Great River Greening:												
Springbrook Nature Center	Anoka	30	24	2	3	3024203	77	\$190,821	Enhancement of 77 acres of oak woodland, oak savanna and native prairie through woody and exotic invasive species management and prescribed fire.	E	Yes	No
Fish Creek Open Space	Ramsey	28	22	2	23&24	2822223 & 2822224	125 202	\$318,674	Enhancement of 124 acres of oak communities through invasive woody removal, pine removal, and Rx burn on portion; restoration of 1 ac canopy gap	E & R		
Minnesota Land Trust:												
Crow River	Hennepin	120	23	2	12	12023212	95	\$17,000	Crow River Corridor: river shoreline, forest	PE	Unknown	No
Rice Lake	Wright/Carver	118/117	25	2	35/2	11825235	128	\$17,000	Crow River Corridor: lake shoreline, forest, grasslands, wetlands	PE	Unknown	No
Oak Lake	Carver	117	25	2	11	11725211	91	\$920,000	Crow River Corridor: lake shoreline, maple-basswood forest, grasslands, wetlands	PE	50%	TBD (fishing)
Valley Creek (2 projects)	Washington	28	20	2	17	2820217	37	TBD	St. Croix River Corridor: hardwood forest, wetland, Valley Creek frontage	PE	Unknown	No
Carmelian Creek	Washington	31	20	2	10	3120210	38	\$17,000	St. Croix River Corridor: rolling hills, hardwood forest, wetlands	PE	Unknown	No
Minnesota Valley Trust, Inc.:												
Blakeley Unit Addition, MN Valley Refuge	Scott	113	26	W	36	11326W36	240	\$ 800,000	Minnesota River: Expand MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	PF	No	Yes
Jessenland Unit Addition, MN Valley Refuge	Sibley	113	23	W	13 & 14	11323W13	240	\$ 800,000	Minnesota River: Expand MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	PF	No	Yes
Rapids Lake Unit Addition, MN Valley Refuge	Carver	115	23	W	31	11523W31	240	\$ 800,000	Minnesota River: Expand MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	PF	No	Yes
St. Lawrence Unit Addition, MN Valley Refuge	Scott	114	24	W	27	11424W27	200	\$ 800,000	Minnesota River: Expand MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	PF	No	Yes

Attachment C. Parcel List

Trust for Public Land:											
MN River / Savage Fen	Scott	115N	21	W	16 & 17	98	\$700,000	Land Acquisition Capital	PF	No	Yes subject to local ordinance
MN River / Pike Lake II	Scott	115N	22	W	23	30	\$1,500,000	Land Acquisition Capital	PF	No	Yes subject to local ordinance
MN River / Upgrala	Hennepin	116	22	W	27, 28, 33	1000	\$5,000,000	Land Acquisition Capital	PF	No	Yes
MS River / Rum River Scout Ca Anoka		32N	25	W	13	170	\$6,000,000	Land Acquisition Capital	PF	No	Yes subject to local ordinance
St. Croix / Franconia and Scane Chisago		33N	19	W	16	200	\$1,600,000	Land Acquisition Capital	PF	No	Yes
St. Croix / Big Marine Area	Washington	31N	20	W	5 & 23	1000	\$10,000,000	Land Acquisition Capital	PF	No	Yes