

Main Request for Funding Form

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Fiscal Year 2014 / ML 2013 Proposal

Program or Project Title: Developing a National Destination for Trout Angling Cold Water Enthusiasts

Funds Requested: \$935,000

Manager's Name: Joe Hoffman

Title: Project Administrator

Organization: City of Preston

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Organization Web Site: www.prestonmn.org

County Locations: Fillmore,

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Southeast Forest

Activity Type:

- Restore
- Enhance
- Protect in Fee

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Wetlands
- Habitat

Abstract

Preston will restore and enhance trout habitat and access for a reach of the South Branch Root River, purchase properties for the National Trout Center and restore the land creating an outdoor public engagement area along Preston's Dripping Springs Bluff.

Activity Detail

Design and Scope of Work

A two mile reach of the South Branch of the Root River (SBRR) wraps through the City of Preston, a community that has promoted trout fishing for decades. Having just completed the annual Preston Trout Days the City is continuing it's involvement and support as the founder of Preston's **National Trout Center** (NTC) which after

three years of operation has now become a 501c3 non-profit initiated a program to build a new facility in Preston, Minnesota.

In 2009, the Preston EDA convened the National Trout Center Steering Committee, this group together with community assistance and cooperation with the Minnesota Trout Association, Trout Unlimited and local businesses opened a temporary learning center in 2011. The National Trout Center showcases "The Trout Capital" of Minnesota, bringing our cold-water assets to a level of national recognition. The new NTC is the beginning of what will be a permanent center that will include indoor and outdoor activity spaces, public green spaces with areas for hands-on demonstrations and education. The NTC seeks to conserve our natural and cultural heritage of trout and their cold-water environments by engaging the public through education, practice and awareness.

Preston and the NTC envision using Legacy Funds to 1) make trout fishing along the Root River in the Preston City limits a centerpiece for trout habitat on 0.85 miles of the South Branch of the Root River (SBRR) along the Root River Trail, 2) to acquire 2.68 acres of land with 665 feet of river frontage, and 3) restore the former commercial properties to a more natural riparian habitat with restored floodplain wetlands and improved angler access along the River.

This is a different type of proposal from the recently funded trout habitat improvements that have been rapidly enhancing trout populations across the state. The first difference is that this is an urban river that defines the City of Preston, not a rural stream in a remote valley. Here in Preston the SBRR is our back yard, right along the popular Root River Trail. The proposed habitat improvement is less than 100 yards from Preston's central business district and no more than 500 yards from any home in Preston. This reach of stream is much more heavily used than the smaller rural streams where trout habitat work has traditionally been completed.

In addition this reach of the SBRR is a fourth order stream, with a flow regime that varies from a winter base flow of 50 cubic feet per second (cfs) to recent floods exceeding 9,000 cfs. The SBRR is a forceful river and does not compare to the second order streams that have flood flows that rarely exceed 1000 cfs. In Preston bank-full flooding is commonplace and some level of flooding has occurred in this reach in 2000, 2002, 2007, 2008 and 2010. The high, eroded and unstable stream banks and the sheer force of the river dictate the need for bank stabilization and in stream structures in a stream reach where the traditional wooden lumber lunker and skyhook structures would not survive the flood forces.

The City of Preston by developing the National Trout Center has developed solid partnerships that are unified in promoting and preserving the angler experience of the trout fisheries of Southeastern Minnesota. This has made Preston the Trout Capitol of Minnesota and the National Trout Center and the Root River a premier fishing destination. In this proposal the City and the NTC are teamed up with the following partners:

- MNDNR – Division of Fisheries. The Lanesboro Area office forms the nucleus for SE Minnesota's trout stream management. The MNDNR has provided planning and design services and will be retained to do the bulk of the habitat improvement and restoration work.
- MNDNR – Parks and Trails who maintain and operate the Root River Trail outside the Preston City Limits. DNR Parks and Trails is providing access, design and logistical assistance.
- Fillmore County Soil and Water Conservation District who help lead the South Branch Root River Watershed Project and the Root River Turbidity TMDL. The SWCD is providing essential planning, design and outreach on water quality, habitat restoration and enhancement, wetlands, stream bank erosion and stormwater management .

- Preston Economic Development Authority. The EDA founded the National Trout Center and is the City's manager of real estate and property including: due diligence, acquisition and re-development for the project.
- Preston Chamber of Commerce and Preston Tourism - Supporters providing outreach and promotion for the NTC.
- The Minnesota Trout Association, founded 25 years ago in Preston "to serve all anglers, fly, spin and bait fishermen". The MTA designed the Inaugural Preston 9-hole Fishing Course and is providing technical assistance and volunteers.
- TUDARE, the regional Trout Unlimited initiative focused on the Driftless Area of the Upper Mississippi River Valley. TUDARE is providing technical assistance and public outreach.

The National Trout Center project provides a tremendous opportunity to create a nationally-recognized center that promotes multiple resource preservation, participation and learning about a unique resource, promotes fishing a primary directive of the LSOHC and initiates the process to create a landmark that will be recognized for its ecological, recreational, sustainable, cultural, and restoration oriented goals. What is also significant about this project is that it will be a spark for economic development by enabling an entire community to become a multi-faceted recreation destination by taking advantage of its existing recreation infrastructure along the Root River.

Planning

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation
- H4 Restore and protect shallow lakes
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds
- H6 Protect and restore critical in-water habitat of lakes and streams

Plans Addressed

- A Vision for Wildlife and Its Use -- Goals and Outcomes 2006-2012
- Driftless Area Restoration Effort
- Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management
- Minnesota DNR AMA Acquisition Plan
- Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Plans
- Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda
- Minnesota Sustainability Framework
- National Fish Habitat Action Plan
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework
- Partners in Flight Conservation Plans for States and Physiographic Regions
- State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Strategic Plan for Coldwater Resources Management in Southeastern Minnesota
- Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Strategic Habitat Conservation Model

LSOHC Statewide Priorities

- Are ongoing, successful, transparent and accountable programs addressing actions and targets of one or more of the ecological sections
- Produce multiple enduring conservation benefits
- Allow public access. This comes into play when all other things about the request are approximately equal
- Address conservation opportunities that will be lost if not immediately acted on
- Use a science-based strategic planning and evaluation model to guide protection, restoration and enhancement, similar to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Strategic Habitat Conservation model
- Address wildlife species of greatest conservation need, Minnesota County Biological Survey data, and rare, threatened and endangered species inventories in land and water decisions, as well as permanent solutions to aquatic invasive species
- Provide Minnesotans with greater public access to outdoor environments with hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities
- Ensures activities for "protecting, restoring and enhancing" are coordinated among agencies, non profits and others while doing this important work
- Target unique Minnesota landscapes that have historical value to fish and wildlife

LSOHC Southeast Forest Section Priorities

- Protect, enhance, and restore habitat for fish, game, and nongame wildlife in rivers, cold-water streams, and associated upland habitat

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds

none

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts

The following outcomes accelerate and supplement current project efforts that include: Outcome 1 involves the habitat restoration, enhancement, improved angler access and protection of a 0.85 mile reach of the SBRR. This habitat improvement effort using large rock and log J-hooks, veins and vortex weirs for larger streams is the first of its kind in a larger river of SE Minnesota. The proposed plans are above and beyond the current habitat improvement plans of Division of Fisheries and Wildlife or Trout Unlimited. Outcome 2: City of Preston's acquisition of four parcels along the Root River Floodplain include removing partially vacant, run-down flood prone commercial properties from the floodplain, providing the space for the NTC facilities. This would accelerate the City's ability to protect the riparian land along the trout stream. Outcome 3: Restorations and enhancement of the outdoor element for the NTC including: stream bank stabilization, handicap angler access, floodplain wetland restoration, stormwater management and outdoor demonstration area. This element accelerates the NTC plans by three years and supplements Preston's efforts at floodplain protection, development of urban open space and the promotion of local tourism opportunities.

Sustainability and Maintenance

The proposed project is part of an on-going City of Preston commitment in support of a development of the National Trout Center and will become the centerpiece for the NTC activities in Preston. The stream restoration and habitat improvement will be designed and constructed to provide new stability to the stream bed and stream banks. The 0.85 mile project extent will be owned and maintained by the City of Preston or is already owned and maintained by the MNDNR Division of Parks and Trails. The maintenance of the stream

bank will be conducted by the City of Preston, stabilization improvements should reduce maintenance needs. The City acquisition, restoration of four flood prone commercial properties, dedication of the land to urban open space and the NTC facility will provide flood protection, sustainability and will reduce long-term maintenance. The outdoor facilities for the NTC will include stormwater management features and restored floodplain wetlands that will require maintenance. With almost three acres of open space along the River the wetlands will be a managed naturalized system and the grounds will require maintenance and landscaping that will be the responsibility of the City and the NTC.

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition? - **Yes**

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

Is this land open for hunting and fishing? - **Yes**

The project occurs on the Root River which is open to fishing each year in accordance to the MNDNR Fishing Regulations. MN DNR Public Trail easements and City property within most of the project limits allow these areas to be open for public access to fishing.

Is the activity on permanently protected land and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15? - **Yes**
(County/Municipal, Public Waters, Restoration of fish habitat within the Root River.)

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Complete design and stream surveys of 0.85 miles of Root River	August 30, 2013
Acquire state and county required grading and environmental permits	November 1, 2013
Complete construction of approved design on the 0.85 miles of Root River	October 15, 2014
Complete land acquisition of 4 land parcels that total 2.68 acres	November 1, 2013
Complete design, surveying, and engineering plans for NTC properties	April 30, 2014
Acquire state and county required grading and environmental permits	April 30, 2014
Complete construction of approved design of NTC properties	October 30, 2015
Fish Surveys (Cost not included in budget request)	Ongoing Surveys
Monitor and Maintenance of completed construction (Cost not included in budget request)	Ongoing M&M

Outcomes

Programs in southeast forest region

- Improved aquatic habitat indicators
- Rivers, streams, and surrounding vegetation provide corridors of habitat

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$935,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$40,000	-	\$40,000
Contracts	\$280,000	\$30,000	In Kind Services	\$310,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0	-	\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$335,000	\$0	-	\$335,000
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0	-	\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0	-	\$0
Travel (in-state)	\$0	\$0	-	\$0
Professional Services	\$160,000	\$0	-	\$160,000
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$0	-	\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0	-	\$0
Capital Equipment	\$60,000	\$0	-	\$60,000
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0	-	\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$100,000	\$0	-	\$100,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0	-	\$0
Total	\$935,000	\$70,000	-	\$1,005,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Administrative 1	0.15	2.00	\$0	\$5,000	In Kind Services	\$5,000
Administrative 2	0.15	2.00	\$0	\$5,000	In Kind Services	\$5,000
MN DNR Fisheries Specialist	0.15	2.00	\$0	\$10,000	In Kind Services	\$10,000
MN DNR Fisheries Tech	0.15	2.00	\$0	\$10,000	In Kind Services	\$10,000
MN DNR Fisheries Tech	0.15	2.00	\$0	\$10,000	In Kind Services	\$10,000
Total	0.75	10.00	\$0	\$40,000	-	\$40,000

Capital Equipment

Item Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Picnic Shelter	\$50,000	\$0	-	\$50,000
Pedestrian Trails	\$10,000	\$0	-	\$10,000

Total	\$60,000	\$0	-	\$60,000
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Output Tables

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	11	11
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	3	3
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	14	14

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$300,000	\$300,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$335,000	\$335,000
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$300,000	\$300,000
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$935,000	\$935,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	11	0	0	11
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	3	0	0	3
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	14	0	0	14

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$300,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$335,000	\$0	\$0	\$335,000
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$300,000
Total	\$0	\$0	\$935,000	\$0	\$0	\$935,000

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

1 miles

Parcel List

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Fillmore

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Harmony Agri	10210206	2	\$106,000	No	Not Applicable	Full
Les Hellickson Rental Home	10210206	0	\$20,000	No	Not Applicable	Full
NAPA	10210206	1	\$200,000	No	Not Applicable	
Preston Oil (POP)	10210206	0	\$9,000	No	Not Applicable	Full

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

