

Request for Funding

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Fiscal Year 2015 / ML 2014

Program or Project Title: Green Corridor Legacy Program - Phase V

Funds Requested: \$3,741,000

Manager's Name: Brad Cobb

Title: Program Manager

Organization: Green Corridor Inc.

Street Address: 200 S. Mill St.

City: Redwood Falls, MN 56283

Telephone: 320-493-4695

E-Mail: 1231TLC@charter.net

Organization Web Site:

County Locations: Brown, Cottonwood, Murray, and Redwood.

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Prairie

Activity Type:

- Restore
- Protect in Fee

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Prairie

Abstract:

This is a phased program proposal which will help create a legacy of habitat connectivity, public access, and economic vitality based on increased outdoor recreational opportunities in the mid-Minnesota River Watershed.

Design and Scope of Work:

The Glacial River Warren created the Minnesota River Valley as it drained Lake Agassiz 10,000+ years ago. The bluff to bluff wall of water carved out one of Minnesota's most scenic landscapes, creating unique geological features, and unique plant communities along the valley and its primary tributaries.

This program incorporates the basic concepts of sustainability and ecosystem management. Minnesota has lost 99% of the original prairie and has seen dramatic declines in grassland dependent wildlife. Examples of the species showing the greatest conservation need in the Program area; the American Badger, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Bobolink to name just a few. Traditional game species are also affected by the decline in habitat such as pheasants, deer, wild turkey, and a variety of dabbling ducks which are associated to prairie wetland complexes.

Efforts to restore, protect, and enhance our wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife are timely as escalating development pressures threaten remaining natural lands and water resources on both public and private lands. The Green Corridor Legacy Program approach will be based on sound science concepts of plan development, setting conservation priorities, developing short and long term strategies to achieve conservation priorities, implement the strategies, and then continue monitoring the outcomes. All of these concepts and

practices will follow existing state wildlife and conservation plans and natural resource management practices in conjunction with agency partners.

Publicly owned natural resource infrastructures (WMA, AMA, SNA, parks/trails, waterways) invigorates local and regional economies by providing outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities supported by hunting, fishing, wildlife observation areas, and other forms of outdoor recreation. New business concepts are likely to arise as a direct result of the recreational and tourism opportunities that will be advanced by this Green Corridor Legacy Program. Because of this concept there is wide support from many stakeholders who will assist the Program activities to achieve the desired outcomes.

The proposed fee title acquisitions will be considered from a priority list of properties based on several key factors of which show the most urgent need and/or opportunities from willing and supportive landowners. All selected projects will have the support and cooperation of the DNR for acceptance into the WMA/AMA inventory system. All proposed projects will provide county notifications and will seek their approval.

The primary work area of the Green Corridor Legacy Program will be Redwood, Renville, Yellow Medicine, Chippewa, Brown, Nicollet, Murray, Lyon, and Cottonwood Counties with an emphasis along the Minnesota River, its tributaries, associated watersheds, and creating/expanding corridor or complexes of habitat. Connecting existing fragments of habitat along and near the Minnesota River and tributaries in the Program area will generate an ecological synergism that will allow game, wildlife, and aquatic species to flourish, while creating multiple outdoor recreational opportunities and improving public access through a series (phases) of funded activities within the nine (9) county Program area.

This program is also supportive of the nomination of the Minnesota River Watershed into the new federal National Blue-way System as administered by the US. Department of Interior.

This Program is directly consistent with the uses of the Outdoor Heritage Fund, as specified in Article XI of the Minnesota Constitution and Minnesota Statute 97A.056: to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife. Furthermore, it will produce multiple conservation benefits across a large targeted and planned geographic area.

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
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

Plans Addressed:

- Long Range Duck Recovery Plan
- Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management
- Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN
- Long Range Plan for the Wild Turkey
- Minnesota DNR AMA Acquisition Plan
- Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda
- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan
- Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework
- State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- 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
- Ensures activities for "protecting, restoring and enhancing" are coordinated among agencies, non profits and others while doing this important work; provides the most cost-effective use of financial resources; and where possible takes into consideration the value of local outreach, education, and community

- engagement to sustain project outcomes
- Produce multiple enduring conservation benefits
- Provide Minnesotans with greater public access to outdoor environments with hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities
- Restore or enhance habitat on permanently protected land
- 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

LSOHC Prairie Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes
- Protect expiring CRP lands

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds:

- No Relationships Listed

This program proposal will supplement other traditional forms of funding (past, current, and future) that the Green Corridor Legacy Program has received such as the Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund.

ENRTF FY2008	\$1,000,000	Completed in 2010
ENRTF FY2012	\$2,000,000	In progress

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:

This program proposal will continue previously funded OHF grants from FY10-13 and expand on those accomplishments of 1,137 acres acquired as WMA's and AMA's. This program will expand on the continuing development of Lamberton WMA complex and other emerging opportunities within the program area.

Sustainability and Maintenance:

First, initial site restoration (bare ground with native vegetation) and development (signage, parking lots, fencing) will be accomplished by this appropriation. The DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife will manage these properties into perpetuity. Routine maintenance will be managed and determined by area DNR staff funded by their traditional sources like the Game & Fish Fund. Periodic enhancements or improvements will be funded by special funding requests. The DNR requires management or stewardship plans for each project which identify periodic inspections and continuing management of the property site. These management practices include such things as; prescribed fire, weed control, and invasive tree removal as needed or required and are usually spelled out in the Initial Development Plan (IDP) for each parcel. Regional partners/stakeholders in conjunction with the Green Corridor Legacy Program will also support these management activities/practices by applying for state funding/grants for on-going maintenance as needed.

Government Approval:

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition? - **No**

County Board of Commissioners will be informed using the standard County Board Notification documentation and will be available for presentations to the various county boards.

Permanent Protection:

Is the land you plan to acquire free of any other permanent protection? - **No**

A majority of the listed parcels are free of permanent protection. Where a potential parcel of land has embedded acres with permanent protection we will seek from the willing landowner a donation of those acres. If the parcel is deemed critical enough for public protection and the landowner is not willing to donate those acres we will seek LSOHC approval to acquire using Outdoor Heritage Funds -see Parcel List for further details.

Hunting and Fishing Plan:

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

Property acquired will become WMA and/or AMA and those rules and/or regulations will apply.

Permanent Protection:

Is the activity on permanently protected land and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15? - **Yes (WMA, AMA)**

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
3-6 property reviews and appraisals	November 2014
3-6 purchase agreements	January 2015
3-6 property closing and transfer to DNR	Summer 2015
3-6 restoration projects on newly acquired lands as needed	Fall 2016

Outcomes

Programs in prairie region:

- Expiring CRP lands are permanently protected *Some properties may have expiring CRP which are of higher priority for protection and possible habitat loss.*
- Agriculture lands are converted to grasslands to sustain functioning prairie systems *Some properties will be converted from row crops to restored prairie which will benefit the natural resource by the number of acres converted.*
- Improved access to public lands *This proposal will add to the region's public land inventory for public use and enjoyment. By providing additional public land gives the public greater opportunities for outdoor recreation.*
- Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife *Measured/evaluated by acres protected and increase in restored prairies of newly acquired acres. Most projects are additions to existing WMA/AMA complexes.*

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$3,741,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$12,000	\$0		\$12,000
Contracts	\$350,000	\$0		\$350,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$3,300,000	\$0		\$3,300,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$1,000	\$0		\$1,000
Professional Services	\$30,000	\$0		\$30,000
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$30,000	\$0		\$30,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	\$18,000	\$0		\$18,000
Total	\$3,741,000	\$0	-	\$3,741,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
RADC Grant Administration	0.07	3.00	\$12,000	\$0		\$12,000
Total	0.07	3.00	\$12,000	\$0	-	\$12,000

Output Tables

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	450	0	0	450
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	670	0	0	670
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1,120	0	0	1,120

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$315,000	\$0	\$0	\$315,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$3,426,000	\$0	\$0	\$3,426,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$3,741,000	\$0	\$0	\$3,741,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	450	0	450
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	670	0	670
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	1,120	0	1,120

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$315,000	\$0	\$315,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,426,000	\$0	\$3,426,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,741,000	\$0	\$3,741,000

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

0 miles

Parcel List

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Brown

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Bashaw WMA addition	10834215	150	\$150,000	Yes	Full	Not Applicable

Cottonwood

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Mound Creek WMA-New	10836235	160	\$1,100,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Murray

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Devils Run WMA addition	10739232	75	\$295,000	Yes	Full	Not Applicable
Irruption WMA #5	10639220	80	\$360,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Redwood

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Lamberton WMA addition	10936217	160	\$1,100,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Lamberton WMA addition	10937214	45	\$295,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

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.

Green Corridor Legacy Projects From 2008- June 2013

*"The Green Corridor Legacy Program -
Creating a legacy of habitat
connectivity, public access to
outdoor recreational opportunities,
and economic viability by helping to
create an outdoor recreational
economy and increased tourism."*

