

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

## Fiscal Year 2021 / ML 2020 Request for Funding

HA 02



Date: May 31, 2019

Program or Project Title: Metro Big Rivers Phase 10

Funds Requested: \$14,407,000

Manager's Name: Deborah Loon

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County Locations: Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Isanti, Ramsey, Scott, Sherburne, Sibley, and Washington.

### Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Metro / Urban

### Activity types:

- Protect in Easement
- Restore
- Enhance
- Protect in Fee

### Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Forest
- Prairie
- Habitat

### Abstract:

Metro Big Rivers Phase 10 will protect 1,260 acres in fee title and 520 acres in permanent conservation easement, restore 298 acres and enhance 375 acres of priority habitat in the big rivers corridors in the Metropolitan Urbanizing Area (MUA). Metro Big Rivers partners will leverage the OHF funds at least 13% with partner funds, private funds, local government contributions, and landowner donations of easement value. In addition, significant volunteer engagement will be invested in habitat enhancement activities, although not technically counted as leverage.

### Design and scope of work:

Metro Big Rivers Phase 10 will protect, restore and enhance prioritized wildlife habitat in the MUA, with an emphasis on the Mississippi, Minnesota and St.Croix Rivers and their tributaries. By expanding, connecting and improving public conservation lands, Metro Big Rivers benefits wildlife and species in greatest need of conservation (SGCN) and provides increased public access for wildlife-based recreation. See brief descriptions below and attachments for detail.

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) will enhance 220 acres at three sites on or near the Mississippi River. Projects include removal of invasive woody and herbaceous plants, spot-mowing, spot-spraying, prescribed burns and seeding.

\*Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park: Enhance 116 acres of oak forest, 5 acres of native bluff prairie and 1 acre of restored prairie.

\*Riverside Park: Enhance 13 acres of oak forest and 1 acre of savanna.

\*Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area: Enhance 50 acres of oak forest, 20 acres of restored prairie and 14 acres of native prairie.

Great River Greening (GRG) will restore 23 acres and enhance 155 acres across six sites. Projects will include removal of invasive woody and herbaceous species, mowing and spot spraying, seeding and planting.

- \* Lebanon Hills Regional Park Phase IV: Enhance 80 acres of oak savanna/woodland and prairie.
- \* Minnehaha Greenway - Methodist Easement: Enhance 15 acres of riparian land along Minnehaha Creek, recently re-meandered by the watershed district.
- \* Mississippi River Bluff Corridor: Restore 18 acres of old agricultural field to prairie.
- \* Strootman Park: Enhance 10 acres of woodland.
- \* Timber River Park: Restore 5 acres of a ballfield to native prairie and woodland habitat. Enhance another 5 acres of woodland and native prairie.

Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) will protect through perpetual conservation easement 520 acres of priority wildlife habitat, including riparian lands, forests, wetlands and grasslands. Projects will be selected through a competitive RFP process that ranks proposals based on ecological significance and cost (criteria attached).

MLT also will restore/enhance 275 acres on private lands already protected through permanent conservation easement. Prioritized properties will be of high ecological significance, adjacent or close to public conservation investments and owned by landowners committed to conservation.

Minnesota Valley Trust (MVT) will protect in fee 800 acres of river frontage, floodplain forest, wetland and upland habitat in the Minnesota River Valley to expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Of the total, 133 acres will be acquired with other non-state funds. All prospective lands have been prioritized by the USFWS and will be restored/enhanced, then open to the public for wildlife-based recreation, including hunting and fishing.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) will protect in fee 460 acres of priority wildlife habitat, including riparian, forest, wetland, and grassland habitat. The potential properties have been identified and prioritized in state, regional and local natural resource plans. Lands acquired will be managed by TPL's public partners (MN DNR and local units of government) and will be open to the public for wildlife-based recreation, including hunting and fishing.

## Which sections of the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are applicable to this project:

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

## Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

- Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

## Describe how your program will advance the indicators identified in the plans selected:

Metro Big Rivers Partnership (MBR) effectively targets action toward protecting, restoring and enhancing the long-term viability of the MUA's essential natural terrestrial and aquatic habitats and their associated wildlife, along and in close proximity to the Minnesota, Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers and their tributaries.

MBR advances the LSOHC 25 Year Strategic Framework for the MUA by creating a network of natural lands that provide healthy core areas of diverse natural communities, corridors for wildlife, and complexes of perpetually-protected and restored lands. MBR addresses all 11 of the LSOHC priority statewide criteria and all 4 of its priority criteria for the MUA.

MBR also advances the indicators of Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan by ensuring the long-term health and viability of Minnesota's wildlife, maintaining and enhancing the resilience of habitats on which SGCN depend, within the Wildlife Action Network and associated Conservation Focus Areas of the MUA.

## Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

### Metro / Urban:

- Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi, and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain)

## Describe how your program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife as indicated in the LSOHC priorities:

Metro Big Rivers focuses on habitat within the three big river corridors and their tributaries within the Metropolitan Urbanizing Area (MUA). We are building, expanding, connecting and restoring complexes and corridors of protected habitat that include wetlands, prairies, forests and aquatic habitat. Opportunities are prioritized for the potential to contribute to building a permanent conservation

legacy that includes outcomes for wildlife and the public. They supplement and expand on other conservation activities the partners are conducting in the MUA.

MBR works in partnership with local, state and federal agency partners and with willing, conservation-minded landowners. High-quality lands are protected through fee title or easement acquisition. Lands that are already under public protection but in a degraded state are targeted for restoration and enhancement, as are lands protected through MBR fee and easement acquisitions. Where possible, protected and restored lands are made available to the public for outdoor recreation, including hunting and fishing, thereby addressing the need to provide such opportunities close to home to a growing and diversifying urban population.

MBR Phase 10 includes a diversity of projects that will significantly expand and improve the conservation legacy in the MUA. MBR 10 projects will protect, restore and enhance prairie, oak savanna, forest, wetland, grassland and shoreline habitat, all within the MUA.

## **Describe how the proposal uses science-based targeting that leverages or expands corridors and complexes, reduces fragmentation or protects areas identified in the MN County Biological Survey:**

Protection partners prioritize work through science-based processes led by the public entities that own or will own interest in the properties (e.g., MN DNR, USFWS). Plans followed include MBS, RESA, Metropolitan Conservation Corridors, Minnesota State Wildlife Action Plan, and the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Actions are targeted toward building conservation corridors and priority habitat complexes.

In addition, the easement partner's competitive RFP process includes a second analysis of all proposed projects submitted by landowners for protection. This assessment evaluates the ecological significance of the proposed parcel, which includes the following three factors:

- Quantity – the size of habitat and/or length of shoreline associated with a parcel, and abundance of Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and Threatened & Endangered (T&E) species
- Quality – the condition of the associated habitat and populations of SGCN and T&E species
- Landscape Context – the extent and condition of natural habitat surrounding the parcel, and the degree to which adjacent property has been protected.

Restoration and enhancement partners use science-based criteria to prioritize activities. This includes consideration of the highest quality natural areas (as determined by MBS), as well as prioritization of work within important ecological corridors identified by a coalition of conservation partners and based on rare species and sensitive landscape features. This prioritization ensures that projects reduce fragmentation and link natural areas within already-established corridors. All of the restoration and enhancement sites are located along or near the three big rivers and important tributaries - some of the most important ecological corridors for migrating and sedentary plant and animal life.

## **How does the proposal address habitats that have significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and/or threatened or endangered species, and list targeted species:**

Metro Big Rivers projects protect and improve habitats needed by wildlife species in greatest conservation need (SGCN) and other targeted species, and where they need them. Many of Minnesota's forest and grassland SGCNs are migratory. Improving habitat along the central flyway (the three big rivers) provides great benefits to all wildlife species, especially during critical migration periods.

Friends of the Mississippi River project sites are located on or near the Mississippi River within the Audubon-designated Important Bird Area. This corridor provides critical habitat for neotropical migrant birds and numerous SGCN. FMR has been tracking breeding bird species at these sites and has recorded 10 SGCNs. The sites are also vital for many other species, especially native pollinators, and provide connectivity to other natural areas.

Great River Greening will also conduct significant habitat work on public conservation lands to improve habitat values for wildlife and SGCN, including birds using the Mississippi River migratory corridor and pollinators. Work will restore and enhance riverine, forest, oak savanna, prairie, and wetland habitat at five conservation sites.

Minnesota Land Trust will target its protection and restoration/enhancement action to priority privately owned lands to permanently protect high-quality upland and shoreland habitats from fragmentation, development, and other impacts that undermine the viability of SGCN and T&E species. Restoration and enhancement of habitat is proposed for lands already protected through easement.

Minnesota Valley Trust will acquire in fee lands identified through the USFWS Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. This plan prioritizes lands for high biodiversity, connectivity, and ability to preserve habitat for SGCN.

The Trust for Public Land will acquire lands in fee identified and prioritized in state, regional, and local natural resource plans due to their high biodiversity significance, connectivity to existing public lands, and ability to preserve habitat for SGCN. Acquisitions and

subsequent habitat work increase breeding and migratory habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, neo-tropical migrants, and non-migratory resident species, protect the diversity of native ecosystems, and improve connectivity and resilience.

## Identify indicator species and associated quantities this habitat will typically support:

DNR staff, in consultation with experts in NGOs and other agencies, compiled a select group of indicator species and associated quantities to be used to answer the question above. The metrics are derived from existing data sources and/or scientific literature, but are necessarily gross averages; they are not accurate at a site-specific scale. They are not intended to be used to score or rank requests, but represent the best information we have for immediate support to the Council's objective. We select a few, not fully inclusive indicators here.

Forests.

Indicator: White-tailed deer.

White-tailed deer use a wide variety of forested habitats throughout Minnesota. Deer densities in the Metropolitan Area will be higher than the six-year average (2010-2015) density of 0.02 deer (pre-fawning) per acre of forest habitat in the LSOHC Northern Forest section.

Grasslands/Prairie.

Indicator: Bobolink and Grasshopper Sparrow.

The breeding territory size of bobolinks and grasshopper sparrows is 1.7 and 2.1 acres respectively in high quality habitat in Wisconsin. If all habitat is occupied, 100 acres could hold approximately 60 and 48 pairs of bobolinks and grasshopper sparrows respectively.

Wetlands.

Indicator: Mallards.

A Joint Venture biological model used to estimate habitat needs uses an accepted rate of 1 mallard pair per 2.47 acres of wetland habitat (noting that upland nesting habitat is also needed).

Trout Streams.

Indicator: Brook Trout.

Available DNR data and published reports suggest an abundance of 100 lbs/acre of brook trout for southeast Minnesota.

## Outcomes:

### Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need *Partners work together to identify priority lands using existing data and public plans, then coordinate protection, restoration and enhancement activities in those priority areas. Work builds upon prior phases and is intended to continue into the future for maximum impact. Mapping shows progress in connecting corridors. Species collections and counts measure impact of activities over time on wildlife and species of greatest conservation need.*

## How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended:

All public partners have committed to maintaining the restoration / enhancement habitat improvements. The MBR restore/enhance partners will raise public and private sources to continue the work past the grant timeline, and will work cooperatively with partners to ensure the project benefits are maintained.

Lands protected through easement by MLT will be sustained following best standards and practices. MLT is a nationally-accredited and insured land trust with a successful stewardship program that includes annual property monitoring, records management, addressing inquiries, tracking ownership changes, investigating potential violations and defending the easement in case of a true violation. MLT provides habitat management plans to landowners and helps them access resources and technical expertise to undertake restoration, enhancement and ongoing management.

Lands acquired in fee title by MVT for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge will be sustained and maintained over the long-term by the USFWS. Habitat restoration / enhancement will be completed by MVT prior to transfer to the USFWS.

Lands acquired in fee title by TPL will be conveyed to the DNR or local units of government for permanent stewardship. Initial site development and restoration costs are included in this proposal. TPL will work with the steward to develop habitat plans.



## Explain the things you will do in the future to maintain project outcomes:

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2022-26	FMR, GRG & Local Partners	Monitoring and assessment	Target actions to maintain habitat	Take restorative action to correct damage
Ongoing	MLT & Landowners (R/E Projects)	Monitoring and assessment	Engage landowners in identifying / undertaking management actions	
Perpetual	MLT Stewardship & Enforcement Fund	Annual monitoring of completed easements	Enforcement actions, as necessary	
2022-23	MVT / MN Valley Lands (MVT subsidiary) & USFWS	Post property after acquisition	Develop habitat restoration and enhancement (R/E) plans	Begin implementation of R/E activities
2023-26	MVT / MVL & USFWS	Conduct habitat R/E and management activities	Develop hunting plan, parking area, signage, as needed	Transfer property to USFWS
2022-23	TPL (OHF) & Public Partners	Post property	Develop habitat R/E plans	
2023-26	TPL - Public Partners	Develop habitat R/E plans	Complete habitat R/E	Steward property for habitat and public recreation

## What is the degree of timing/opportunistic urgency and why it is necessary to spend public money for this work as soon as possible:

The three major rivers, which converge in the Metro Urbanizing Area (MUA), are of significant importance to a myriad of migrating species and SGCN. Three intersecting issues create urgency for Metro Big Rivers Partnerships' work in the MUA -- 1) the continued decline of many wildlife species, most notably, birds and pollinators, 2) declining habitat these species need to rebound and thrive, and 3) rising land values and development activity.

Protecting and enhancing habitat in the MUA is especially critical now, as land values and housing developments are both rising, placing renewed demand on lands throughout the area. Metro Big Rivers projects will defend against rising land values (especially along lakes and rivers), add needed and significant wildlife habitat, improve connectivity and habitat values (especially for wildlife and SGCN) and increase needed public access to wildlife-based outdoor opportunities in metro area, including hunting and fishing.

## Does this program include leverage in funds:

Yes

Metro Big Rivers 10 will leverage the OHF appropriation with at least \$1,922,100 in other funds (13%). The partnership has secured commitments of supplemental funding from the partners, private sources, local government units, watershed districts / management organizations and park districts.

MLT encourages private landowners to fully or partially donate the appraised value of their conservation easement. This donated value is shown as leveraged funds in the proposal. MLT has a long track record gaining landowner participation in this fashion. To date across all MBR grants, \$1,866,000 in easement value has been donated by landowners as leverage. MLT expects a significant landowner contribution to continue in MBR Phase 10; a conservative estimate of leverage is \$840,000.

Crews of volunteers will add significant in-kind value to the restoration / enhancement projects. This value is not included in the leverage funds, but is important to note here. Volunteers effectively replace or enhance paid crews and contracts on many projects, saving funds. Use of volunteers also effectively educates and engages the community in conservation work, which is critical for the future of conservation.

## Relationship to other funds:

- Not Listed

## Describe the relationship of the funds:

Not Listed

## Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Any state agency or organization requesting a direct appropriation from the OHF must inform the LSOHC at the time of the request for funding is made, whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose:

This funding will supplant other previous funding used for the same purpose.

**Describe the source and amount of non-OHF money spent for this work in the past:**

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2009	Other State	741,058
2012	Other State	684,449
2012	Local & Federal	413,561
2012	Private & Other	2,063,388
2013	Other State	2,130,284
2013	Local & Federal	1,320,606
2013	Private	1,253,038
2014	Other State	1,873,857
2014	Local	516,119
2014	Private	1,931,527
2015	Other State	2,224,751
2009	Local & Federal	230,310
2015	Local	1,295,000
2015	Private	1,449,198
2016	Other State	912,867
2016	Local & Federal	1,822,000
2016	Private	2,700,091
2017	Other State	630,060
2017	Local	739,800
2017	Private & Other	1,278,433
2018	Other State	656,593
2018	Local	253,321
2009	Private	940,884
2018	Private	2,025,433
2010	Other State	2,010,658
2010	Local & Federal	485,122
2010	Private	3,516,521
2011	Other State	1,429,358
2011	Local & Federal	543,900
2011	Private	1,578,572

**Activity Details**

**Requirements:**

If funded, this proposal will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056 - **Yes**

Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j) - **No**

We will notify local units of government as required by statute.

Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection - **Yes**

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

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program - **Yes**

Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 - **Yes (WMA, Permanently Protected Conservation Easements County/Municipal)**

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program - **No**

**Land Use:**

Will there be planting of corn or any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program - **Yes**

## Explain

The purpose of the Minnesota Land Trust's conservation easements is to protect existing high quality natural habitat and to preserve opportunities for future restoration. As such, we restrict any agricultural lands and use on the properties. In cases in which there are agricultural lands associated with the larger property, we will either carve the agricultural area out of the conservation easement, or in some limited cases, we may include a small percentage of agricultural lands if it is not feasible to carve those areas out. In such cases, however, we will not use OHF funds to pay the landowners for that portion of the conservation easement.

### Restoration/Enhancement:

Short-term use of agricultural crops is an accepted best practice for preparing a site for prairie restoration. For example, short-term use of soybeans could be used for restorations in order to control weed seedbeds prior to prairie planting. In some cases this necessitates the use of GMO treated products to facilitate herbicide use in order to control weeds present in the seedbank.

Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing - **No**

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion - **Yes**

Lands acquired for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge will be open for public hunting and fishing according to the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act. The lands will be opened through a public process prescribed by the Act. We anticipate hunting and fishing opportunities will be like those already established for lands previously acquired for the Refuge. For specific information, refer to the Refuge's website - [http://www.fws.gov/midwest/MinnesotaValley/documents/hunting\\_regs.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/MinnesotaValley/documents/hunting_regs.pdf).

Lands acquired by The Trust for Public Land will be open for fishing and hunting.

Will the eased land be open for public use - **No**

Are there currently trails or roads on any of the acquisitions on the parcel list - **Yes**

Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:

We are not aware of any trails at this time, although some parcels acquired in fee title may have existing field roads or low maintenance trails.

Will the trails or roads remain and uses continue to be allowed after OHF acquisition - **Yes**

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

Any pre-existing low-maintenance roads and trails on properties acquired by MVT for the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS) may be continued under a plan developed for the purpose of property access for habitat maintenance and public use of the property for wildlife-dependent recreation (e.g., hunting and fishing).

Trails and roads on eased lands are identified in the project baseline report and will be monitored annually as part of MLT's stewardship and enforcement protocols. Maintenance of permitted roads or trails in line with the easement terms will be the responsibility of the landowner.

TPL is not aware of any trails or roads on any of the acquisitions. If any are discovered on lands to be managed by the DNR, they will be managed per DNR policy for WMAs, AMAs, SNAs or State Forests. If they are discovered on lands to be managed by local units of government, they will be managed per a maintenance and monitoring plan developed in consultation with LSOHC staff.

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved as a result of the OHF acquisition - **No**

## Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
FMR - Enhance 220 acres	June 2025
G RG - Restore 23 and enhance 155 acres	June 2025
MLT - Protect 520 acres under conservation easement	June 2023
MLT - Restore / enhance 275 acres	June 2025
MVT - Protect 800 acres through fee title acquisition	June 2023
TPL - Protect 460 acres through fee title acquisition	June 2023



# Budget Spreadsheet

**Total Amount of Request: \$14,407,000**

## Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$851,500	\$130,000	Dakota County, GRG, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Three Rivers Park District, City of Andover, 3M Foundation, Flint Hills Resources	\$981,500
Contracts	\$1,490,000	\$61,000	Washington County Parks, Flint Hills Resources	\$1,551,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$5,800,000	\$100,000	RIM, Private	\$5,900,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$2,450,000	\$700,000	MN Valley Trust, County	\$3,150,000
Easement Acquisition	\$2,800,000	\$840,000	Private Landowners	\$3,640,000
Easement Stewardship	\$240,000	\$0		\$240,000
Travel	\$23,300	\$2,000	Private	\$25,300
Professional Services	\$369,900	\$0		\$369,900
Direct Support Services	\$235,600	\$86,000	Private	\$321,600
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$30,000	\$0		\$30,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$16,000	\$0		\$16,000
Supplies/Materials	\$50,700	\$3,000	Vadnais Lake Area Watershed Management Organization	\$53,700
DNR IDP	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,407,000</b>	<b>\$1,922,000</b>		<b>-\$16,329,000</b>

## Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
GRG Staff (Ecologist, Technicians, etc.)	0.38	5.00	\$118,000	\$100,000	Dakota County, GRG, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Three Rivers Park District, City of Andover	\$218,000
TPL Staff (Protection and Legal)	0.47	3.00	\$232,000	\$0		\$232,000
MLT Protection Staff	1.00	3.00	\$202,500	\$0		\$202,500
MLT Restoration Staff	0.75	3.00	\$270,000	\$0		\$270,000
FMR Staff (Ecologists, Conservation Director, Stewardship staff, Bookkeeper)	0.37	3.00	\$29,000	\$30,000	3M Foundation, Flint Hills Resources	\$59,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>17.00</b>	<b>\$851,500</b>	<b>\$130,000</b>		<b>-\$981,500</b>

## Budget and Cash Leverage by Partnership

BudgetName	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	Great River Greening (GRG)	\$118,000	\$100,000	Dakota County, GRG, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Three Rivers Park District, City of Andover	\$218,000
Contracts	Great River Greening (GRG)	\$570,000	\$0		\$570,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	Great River Greening (GRG)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	Great River Greening (GRG)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	Great River Greening (GRG)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	Great River Greening (GRG)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	Great River Greening (GRG)	\$6,000	\$0		\$6,000
Professional Services	Great River Greening (GRG)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support	Great River				

Direct Support Services	Great River Greening (GRG)	\$22,000	\$0		\$22,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	Great River Greening (GRG)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	Great River Greening (GRG)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	Great River Greening (GRG)	\$6,000	\$0		\$6,000
Supplies/Materials	Great River Greening (GRG)	\$45,000	\$3,000	Vadnais Lake Area Watershed Management Organization	\$48,000
DNR IDP	Great River Greening (GRG)	\$0	\$0		\$0
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$767,000</b>	<b>\$103,000</b>		<b>-\$870,000</b>

**Personnel - Great River Greening (GRG)**

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
GRG Staff (Ecologist, Technicians, etc.)	0.38	5.00	\$118,000	\$100,000	Dakota County, GRG, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Three Rivers Park District, City of Andover	\$218,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>\$118,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>		<b>-\$218,000</b>

BudgetName	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	MN Valley Trust, Inc.	\$0	\$0		\$0
Contracts	MN Valley Trust, Inc.	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	MN Valley Trust, Inc.	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	MN Valley Trust, Inc.	\$2,000,000	\$600,000	MN Valley Trust	\$2,600,000
Easement Acquisition	MN Valley Trust, Inc.	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	MN Valley Trust, Inc.	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	MN Valley Trust, Inc.	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	MN Valley Trust, Inc.	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	MN Valley Trust, Inc.	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	MN Valley Trust, Inc.	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	MN Valley Trust, Inc.	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	MN Valley Trust, Inc.	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	MN Valley Trust, Inc.	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	MN Valley Trust, Inc.	\$0	\$0		\$0
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$2,000,000</b>	<b>\$600,000</b>		<b>-\$2,600,000</b>

BudgetName	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	Trust for Public Land (TPL)	\$232,000	\$0		\$232,000
Contracts	Trust for Public Land (TPL)	\$100,000	\$0		\$100,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	Trust for Public Land (TPL)	\$5,800,000	\$100,000	RIM, Private	\$5,900,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	Trust for Public Land (TPL)	\$450,000	\$100,000	County	\$550,000
Easement Acquisition	Trust for Public Land (TPL)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	Trust for Public Land (TPL)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	Trust for Public Land (TPL)	\$0	\$2,000	Private	\$2,000
Professional Services	Trust for Public Land (TPL)	\$148,000	\$0		\$148,000
Direct Support Services	Trust for Public Land (TPL)	\$86,000	\$86,000	Private	\$172,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	Trust for Public Land (TPL)	\$30,000	\$0		\$30,000
Capital Equipment	Trust for Public Land (TPL)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	Trust for Public Land (TPL)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	Trust for Public Land (TPL)	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	Trust for Public Land (TPL)	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$6,896,000</b>	<b>\$288,000</b>		<b>-\$7,184,000</b>

**Personnel - Trust for Public Land (TPL)**

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
TPL Staff (Protection and Legal)	0.47	3.00	\$232,000	\$0		\$232,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>\$232,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>-\$232,000</b>

BudgetName	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
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Personnel	Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)	\$29,000	\$30,000	3M Foundation, Flint Hills Resources	\$59,000
Contracts	Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)	\$266,000	\$61,000	Washington County Parks, Flint Hills Resources	\$327,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)	\$1,300	\$0		\$1,300
Professional Services	Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)	\$3,700	\$0		\$3,700
DNR IDP	Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)	\$0	\$0		\$0
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$91,000</b>		<b>-\$391,000</b>

**Personnel - Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)**

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
FMR Staff (Ecologists, Conservation Director, Stewardship staff, Bookkeeper)	0.37	3.00	\$29,000	\$30,000	3M Foundation, Flint Hills Resources	\$59,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>\$29,000</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>		<b>-\$59,000</b>

Budget Name	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	Minnesota Land Trust	\$472,500	\$0		\$472,500
Contracts	Minnesota Land Trust	\$554,000	\$0		\$554,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	Minnesota Land Trust	\$2,800,000	\$840,000	Private Landowners	\$3,640,000
Easement Stewardship	Minnesota Land Trust	\$240,000	\$0		\$240,000
Travel	Minnesota Land Trust	\$16,000	\$0		\$16,000
Professional Services	Minnesota Land Trust	\$221,900	\$0		\$221,900
Direct Support Services	Minnesota Land Trust	\$127,600	\$0		\$127,600
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	Minnesota Land Trust	\$10,000	\$0		\$10,000
Supplies/Materials	Minnesota Land Trust	\$2,000	\$0		\$2,000
DNR IDP	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$4,444,000</b>	<b>\$840,000</b>		<b>-\$5,284,000</b>

**Personnel - Minnesota Land Trust**

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MLT Protection Staff	1.00	3.00	\$202,500	\$0		\$202,500
MLT Restoration Staff	0.75	3.00	\$270,000	\$0		\$270,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.75</b>	<b>6.00</b>	<b>\$472,500</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>-\$472,500</b>

Amount of Request: \$14,407,000  
Amount of Leverage: \$1,922,000  
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 13.34%  
DSS + Personnel: \$1,087,100  
As a % of the total request: 7.55%  
Easement Stewardship: \$240,000  
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 8.57%



**How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program:**

Partners have direct support expenses essential to complete conservation projects, which include such costs as administrative support staff, office space, printing and office supplies.

GRG -- DSS rate is 10% of personnel costs. Great River Greening is in the process of applying for an approved rate with MN DNR.

MLT -- In a process approved by the DNR on March 17, 2017, MLT's DSS rate includes the allowable direct and necessary expenditures that are not captured in other line items in the budget. This is similar to the MLT's proposed federal indirect rate. MLT will apply this DNR-approved rate only to personnel expenses.

FMR and MVT are not requesting DSS.

TPL -- DSS rate is based upon our federal rate which has been approved the the DNR. 50% of these costs are requested from the grant, 50% is contributed as leverage.

**What is included in the contracts line?**

Restoration / enhancement contracts with service providers (FMR, GRG, MLT). Habitat management plan preparation, landowner outreach by county SWCD offices (MLT). Potential site clean-up and initial restoration activities (TPL).

**Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental? - Yes**

**Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging:**

NA

**Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:**

Leverage includes expected donated easement value by landowners (MLT) and possible partial donation of fee title value by landowners (TPL); committed partner and other private funds (FMR, GRG, MVT, TPL); committed and anticipated city, county, park district and watershed district / organization funds (FMR, GRG, TPL), and anticipated RIM funds (TPL).

**Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable? - Yes**

**Tell us how this project would be scaled and how administrative costs are affected, describe the "economy of scale" and how outputs would change with reduced funding, if applicable:**

Because MBR protects, restores and enhances multiple parcels, it is scalable. Less funding will result in fewer acres protected, restored and enhanced, and thus missed opportunities. Some of the administrative and outreach costs are more fixed, thus lower funding reduces economies of scale.

**What is the cost per easement for stewardship and explain how that amount is calculated?**

The average cost per easement to perpetually fund the Minnesota Land Trust's long-term monitoring and enforcement obligations is \$24,000. This figure has been determined by using a detailed stewardship funding calculator or "cost analysis" which is the industry standard according to the Land Trust Accreditation process. This cost analysis examines seventeen different categories of future annual expenditures related to the management of the easement and then calculates what the Land Trust needs in one-time funding to cover these various expenditures in perpetuity. In addition, the Land Trust seeks private contributions whenever possible to further leverage these state funds. The Minnesota Land Trust reviews and updates this cost-analysis periodically to ensure that the organization will have the capacity to fulfill its ongoing obligations. This cost-analysis is on file with the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council staff and the Land Trust shares a new version with the Council whenever updates are made.

## Output Tables

**Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type**

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	23	0	275	298
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	110	115	115	80	420
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	320	200	320	0	840
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	520	520
Enhance	45	41	289	0	375
Total	475	379	724	875	2,453

**Table 1b. How many of these Prairie acres are Native Prairie?**

Type	Native Prairie
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Easement	0
Enhance	19
Total	19

**Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type**

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$63,000	\$0	\$857,000	\$920,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$1,688,900	\$1,766,200	\$1,766,200	\$1,224,800	\$6,446,100
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$800,000	\$500,000	\$1,150,000	\$0	\$2,450,000
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,586,700	\$3,586,700
Enhance	\$194,000	\$30,200	\$780,000	\$0	\$1,004,200
Total	\$2,682,900	\$2,359,400	\$3,696,200	\$5,668,500	\$14,407,000

**Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	298	0	0	0	0	298
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	420	0	0	0	0	420
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	840	0	0	0	0	840
Protect in Easement	520	0	0	0	0	520
Enhance	375	0	0	0	0	375
Total	2,453	0	0	0	0	2,453

**Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$920,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$920,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$6,446,100	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,446,100
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$2,450,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,450,000
Protect in Easement	\$3,586,700	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,586,700
Enhance	\$1,004,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,004,200
Total	\$14,407,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$14,407,000

**Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type**

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$0	\$2,739	\$0	\$3,116
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$15,354	\$15,358	\$15,358	\$15,310
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$3,594	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,898
Enhance	\$4,311	\$737	\$2,699	\$0

**Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$3,087	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$15,348	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$2,917	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$6,898	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$2,678	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

*Automatic system calculation / not entered by managers*

**Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles**

1.5

I have read and understand Section 15 of the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, Minnesota Statute 97A.056, and the Call for Funding Request. I certify I am authorized to submit this proposal and to the best of my knowledge the information provided is true and accurate.

# Parcel List

## Explain the process used to select, rank and prioritize the parcels:

FMR and GRG work with their public partners and other interested stakeholders to identify priority projects and areas. Criteria includes ecological and habitat value and potential (biodiversity, size and location), congruence with existing plans and priority areas, adjacency and connectedness to other public and protected lands and complexes, willing and committed landowners and leveraged opportunities.

MLT's competitive RFP process for identifying, prioritizing and selecting parcels for the Metro Big Rivers easement program is attached. MLT prioritizes parcels for restoration and enhancement that are of high ecological significance, adjacent or close to public conservation investments and owned by landowners committed to conservation.

MVT seeks to acquire land within the boundaries established by the USFWS for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge in its Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Within those boundaries, parcels are prioritized based on adjacency or proximity to lands already publicly-protected, the opportunity to protect lands from development and restore habitat to meet ecological and public use objectives, and the feasibility of completing large blocks of protected and publicly-managed lands over time.

TPL works with its public partners (Minnesota DNR and local units of government) to identify priority opportunities that expand on and create new public conservation investments that protect high-quality wetland, woodland, prairie and riparian habitat.

## Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

### Anoka

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
GRC - Strootman Park	03224219	10	\$52,000	Yes
GRC - Timber Rivers Park	03225212	10	\$40,000	Yes

### Carver

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
MLT - Oak Lake	11725211	84	\$100,000	Yes

### Dakota

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
FMR - Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area	02722227	84	\$81,530	Yes
GRC - Lebanon Hills Phase IV	02723235	80	\$400,000	Yes

### Hennepin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
GRC - Minnehaha Greenway, Methodist Easement	11721220	15	\$60,000	Yes
GRC - Mississippi River Bluffs	12022209	18	\$63,000	Yes

### Isanti

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
MLT - Medveckey Woods	03423202	40	\$20,000	Yes
MLT - Stanchfield Creek	03724231	5	\$10,000	Yes

### Ramsey

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
GRC - Vadnais / Sucker Lake	03022219	45	\$152,000	Yes

## Sherburne

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
MLT - Hunter Lake	03426224	30	\$60,000	Yes
MLT - Pickerel Lake	03430203	40	\$80,000	Yes

## Washington

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
FMR - Cottage Grove Ravine Park	02721223	122	\$188,274	Yes
FMR - Riverside Park	02722212	14	\$29,254	Yes
MLT - Cedar Cliff	03219206	20	\$40,000	Yes
MLT - Hardwood Creek	03221235	80	\$80,000	Yes
MLT - Linkert Farm	03021209	30	\$65,000	Yes
MLT - Old Mill Stream	03120201	45	\$90,000	Yes
MLT - Silver Creek	03020216	50	\$100,000	Yes
MLT - Valley Creek	02820217	15	\$45,000	Yes

## Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

### Carver

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
MVT - Rapids Lake Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	11423206	118	\$826,000	No	Full	Full
MVT - San Francisco Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	11424201	168	\$546,000	No	Full	Full

### Chisago

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
TPL - Carlos Avery WMA Addition	03321205	60	\$80,000	No	Full	Full

### Hennepin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
TPL - Prairie Hill WMA	11824223	307	\$3,500,000	No	Full	Full
TPL - Robina Lake WMA Addition	11824208	75	\$360,000	No	Full	Full

### Scott

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
MVT - Blakeley Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	11326236	194	\$630,500	No	Full	Full

### Sibley

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
MVT - Jessenland Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	11326213	200	\$650,000	No	Full	Full

## Washington

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
TPL - Bayport WMA Addition 1	02920209	195	\$3,010,000	No	Full	Full
TPL - Bayport WMA Addition 2	02920222	82	\$1,100,000	No	Full	Full
TPL - Hardwood Creek WMA Addition	03221226	470	\$700,000	No	Full	Full
TPL - May Township	03120209	40	\$450,000	No	Full	Full
TPL - Paul Hugo Farms WMA Addition	03121222	230	\$1,000,000	No	Full	Full

### Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

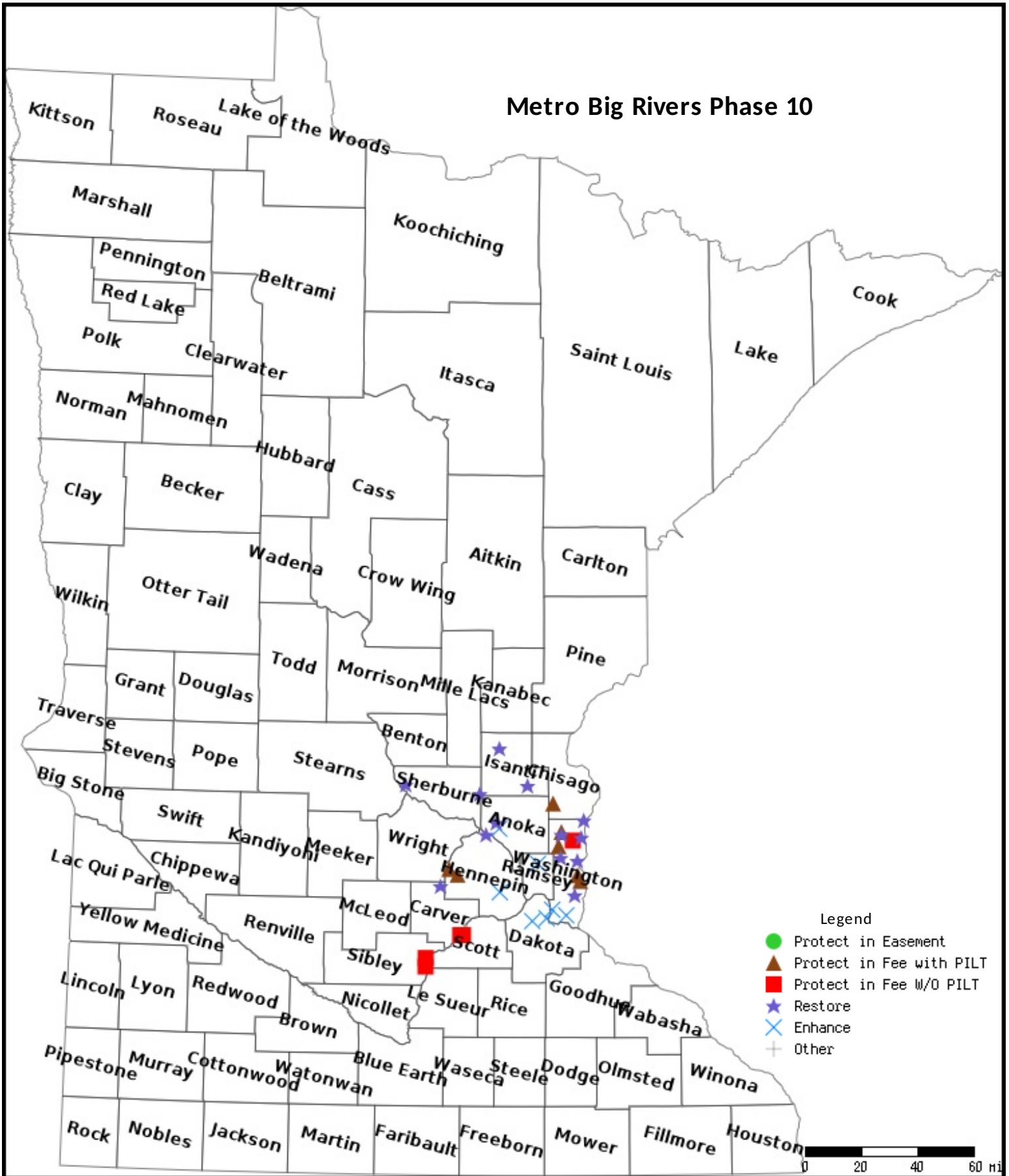
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

### Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

# Parcel Map

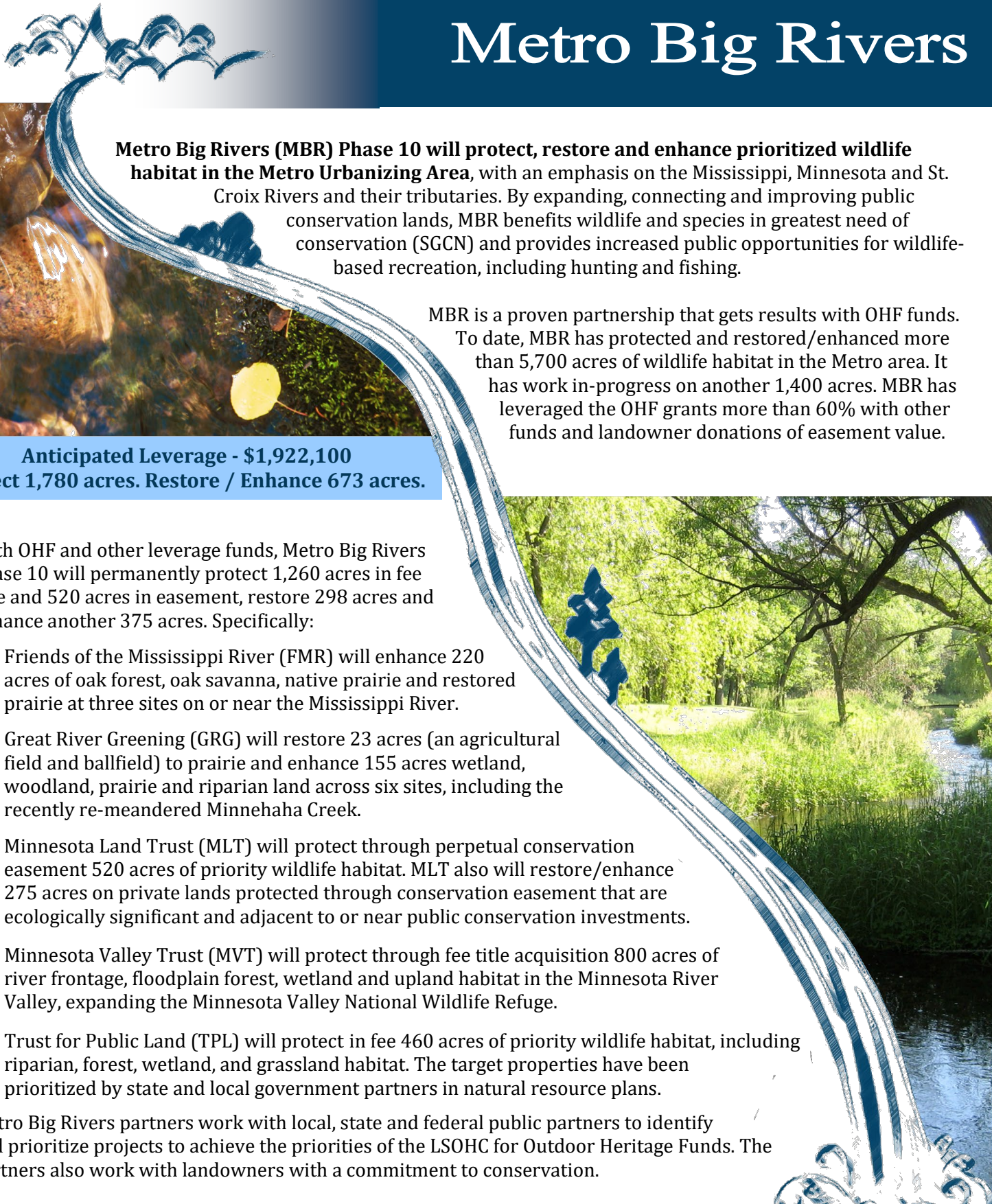
## Metro Big Rivers Phase 10



Data Generated From Parcel List



# Metro Big Rivers



**Metro Big Rivers (MBR) Phase 10 will protect, restore and enhance prioritized wildlife habitat in the Metro Urbanizing Area**, with an emphasis on the Mississippi, Minnesota and St. Croix Rivers and their tributaries. By expanding, connecting and improving public conservation lands, MBR benefits wildlife and species in greatest need of conservation (SGCN) and provides increased public opportunities for wildlife-based recreation, including hunting and fishing.

MBR is a proven partnership that gets results with OHF funds. To date, MBR has protected and restored/enhanced more than 5,700 acres of wildlife habitat in the Metro area. It has work in-progress on another 1,400 acres. MBR has leveraged the OHF grants more than 60% with other funds and landowner donations of easement value.

**Anticipated Leverage - \$1,922,100**  
**Protect 1,780 acres. Restore / Enhance 673 acres.**

With OHF and other leverage funds, Metro Big Rivers Phase 10 will permanently protect 1,260 acres in fee title and 520 acres in easement, restore 298 acres and enhance another 375 acres. Specifically:

- Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) will enhance 220 acres of oak forest, oak savanna, native prairie and restored prairie at three sites on or near the Mississippi River.
- Great River Greening (GRG) will restore 23 acres (an agricultural field and ballfield) to prairie and enhance 155 acres wetland, woodland, prairie and riparian land across six sites, including the recently re-meandered Minnehaha Creek.
- Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) will protect through perpetual conservation easement 520 acres of priority wildlife habitat. MLT also will restore/enhance 275 acres on private lands protected through conservation easement that are ecologically significant and adjacent to or near public conservation investments.
- Minnesota Valley Trust (MVT) will protect through fee title acquisition 800 acres of river frontage, floodplain forest, wetland and upland habitat in the Minnesota River Valley, expanding the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.
- Trust for Public Land (TPL) will protect in fee 460 acres of priority wildlife habitat, including riparian, forest, wetland, and grassland habitat. The target properties have been prioritized by state and local government partners in natural resource plans.

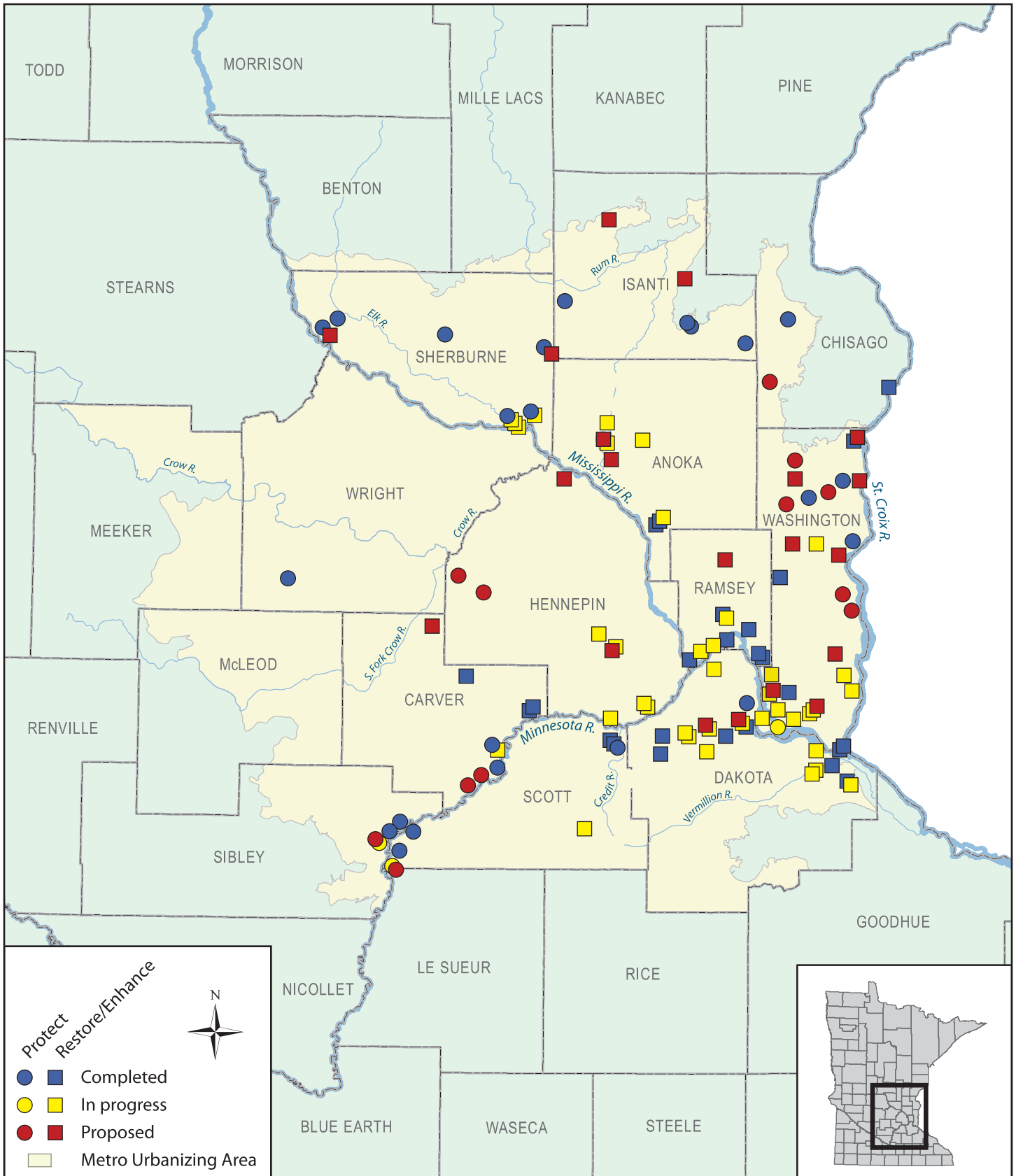
Metro Big Rivers partners work with local, state and federal public partners to identify and prioritize projects to achieve the priorities of the LSOHC for Outdoor Heritage Funds. The partners also work with landowners with a commitment to conservation.



For more information:  
Deborah Loon  
Minnesota Valley Trust  
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# Metro Big Rivers Habitat Partnership

## Phase 10





## MINNESOTA LAND TRUST

### **A Decision Support Tool for Prioritizing Conservation Easement Opportunities**

The Minnesota Land Trust often employs within its conservation program areas an RFP (Request for Proposals) model to both identify high-quality projects and introduce a level of competition into the easement acquisition process. Below, we briefly discuss how the system works and the framework put in place to sort the varied opportunities that come before us.

#### **How the Ranking System Works**

The parcel ranking framework employed through the Minnesota Land Trust's RFP process is intended as a **decision support tool** to aid in identifying, among the slate of landowners submitting bids for conservation easements, the most ecologically significant opportunities for the price. Using this framework, the Land Trust and its partners use an array of weighted data sets tailored to the specific circumstances inherent in a program area to identify those worthy of consideration.

It is important to note that this parcel ranking framework enables the Land Trust to rank projects *relative* to one another. That's important to do, but it's also important to understand how a project (or suite of projects) relates to the ideal situation (i.e., a project that is of exceptional size, condition and superb landscape context). If, for example, an RFP generated 20 proposals in a program area, the framework would effectively sift among them and identify the relatively good from those relatively bad. However, this information alone would not determine whether any of those parcels were of sufficient quality to pursue for protection (all may be of insufficient quality to warrant expenditure of funds). To solve this problem and make sure ranked projects are high priorities for conservation, we step back and evaluate them relative to the ideal - i.e., is each project among the best opportunities for conservation we can expect to find in the program area?

As part of its proposals to LSOHC, the Land Trust included easement sign-up criteria that laid out at a general level the framework utilized by the organization. Below is a more detailed description of the process the Land Trust utilizes in ranking potential parcels relative to one another, and identifying those with which a conservation easement will be pursued. We also include a ranking form illustrating the representative weighting applied to each criteria. These weightings will be refined as we move forward in applying this approach in each program area.

#### **The Framework**

We evaluate potential projects based on two primary factors: ecological significance and cost. Both are assessed independent of one another.

### **Factor 1: Ecological Significance**

The Ecological Significance score is determined by looking at 3 subfactors, each weighted equally (as a default). Each of these constitutes 1/3 of the total ecological significance score.

#### **Subfactors:**

- **Size or Quantity** – the area of the parcel to be protected (how big is it?), length of shoreline, etc. The bigger the better.
- **Condition or Quality** – the condition of the natural communities and/or target species found on a parcel. The higher quality the better.
- **Landscape Context** – what’s around the parcel, both ecologically and from a protected status standpoint. The more ecologically intact the surrounding landscape the better; the extent to which a parcel builds off of other protected lands to form complexes or corridors, the better.

Note that we have the ability to emphasize one subfactor over another if the specific circumstances warrant it, but we begin with a default standard at the onset. At present, all of our geographies are using the default standard.

#### **Indicators:**

A suite of weighted indicators is used to score each parcel relative to each of the above subfactors. Indicators are selected based on their ability to effectively inform the scoring of parcels relative to each of the respective subfactors. Weightings for each criterion are assessed and vetted to ensure that a set of indicators for each subfactor produces meaningful results, then applied across each of the proposed parcels. Finally, we vet and make improvements to the scoring matrix when we identify issues or circumstances where results seem erroneous.

Data sets used for this purpose must offer wall-to-wall coverage across the program area to ensure that bias for or against parcels does not creep into the equation. Where gaps in such coverages exist, we attempt to fill them in to the extent feasible (via field inventory, etc.). Finally, we vet and make improvements to the scoring matrix when we identify issues or circumstances where results seem erroneous.

### **Factor 2: Cost**

Cost is a second major factor used in our consideration of parcels. Although ecological significance is *the* primary factor in determining the merits of a project, our RFP programs also strive to make the greatest conservation impact with the most efficient use of State funds. As such, we look at the overall cost of each project relative to its ecological significance; we also ask landowners to consider donating all or some of their easement value to the cause and to better position their proposals. Many landowners participate in that fashion.

Cost, as a primary factor, is assessed independently of the ecological factors. Given equal ecological significance, a project of lower cost will be elevated over those of higher cost in the ranking. That said, exceptionally high quality projects are likely to be pursued even if no or modest landowner donation is put forward. Alternatively, there are projects offered as full donations that are not moved forward because their ecological significance is not acceptable. The degree to which cost factors into the ranking of parcels relative to one another is made on a case-by-case basis.

MINNESOTA LAND TRUST METRO BIG RIVERS PROTECTION PROGRAM Conservation Easement Selection Worksheet		SITE 1	SITE 2	SITE 3	SITE 4	SITE 5	SITE 6	SITE 7	SITE 8	SITE 9	SITE 10	SITE 11	SITE 12	Notes
COUNTY														
100 Pts	<b>ECOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE</b>													
Weighting Factor	<b>Size/Abundance of Habitat (33 points)</b>													
	a) Size (33 pts): Acres of Habitat to be Protected by an Easement													
	SUBTOTAL:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weighting Factor	<b>Quality of Natural Resources to be Protected by the Easement (33 points)</b>													
	a) Habitat Quality (28 pts): Quality of Existing Ecological Systems (Terrestrial & Aquatic)													
	b) Imperiled Species (5 pts): Occurrence of Documented Rare Species on Parcel													
	SUBTOTAL:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weighting Factor	<b>Landscape Context (34 points)</b>													
	<b>Current Status (30 points)</b>													
	a) Protection Context (15 points)													
	i. Size of Contiguous Protected Lands (8 pts)													
	ii. Amount of Protected Lands within 3 miles of Property													
	: Protected Land within 0.5 miles of Property (4 pts)													
	: Protected Land 0.5-3 miles from Property (3 pts)													
	b) Ecological Context (15 points)													
	i. Size of Contiguous Ecological Habitat (8 pts)													
	ii. Amount of Ecological Habitat within 3 miles of Property													
	: Ecological Habitat within 0.5 miles of Property (4 pts)													
	: Ecological Habitat 0.5-3 miles from Property (3 pts)													
	<b>Future Potential (4 points)</b>													
	a) Conservation Plan Context (2 pts)													
	b) Amount of Existing Activity (2 pts)													
	SUBTOTAL:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>TOTAL ECOLOGICAL VALUE POINTS</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>COST</b>														
	i. Bid amount (\$)/acre	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	ii. Estimated donative value (\$)/acre	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	<b>TOTAL ACQUISITION COST (\$)</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

KEY	
	Priority
	Possible
	Out





# MINNESOTA VALLEY TRUST

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.

## **The Minnesota Valley Trust, Inc. expands and improves opportunities for the public to connect with wildlife and nature on the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District.**

Since its creation in 2000, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc. (Trust) has acquired 6,000 acres to expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and its Wetland Management District (Refuge).

In addition to land acquisition, the Trust restores and enhances wildlife habitat throughout the Refuge and supports visitor services and urban outreach objectives.

The Trust works in close partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to set goals and identify opportunities. It works within boundaries established by the USFWS in its Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Refuge complex.

Land acquisition and restoration / enhancement is pursued primarily for the following Refuge expansion units within the Minnesota River corridor, stretching from suburban to rural – Blakeley Unit (Scott County), Jessenland Unit (Sibley County), Rapids Lake Unit (Carver County), St. Lawrence Unit (Scott County) and San Francisco Unit (Carver County).

In Metro Big Rivers phases 1 through 7, the Trust acquired 690 acres for the Refuge. Outdoor Heritage Fund grants of \$2,775,000 were leveraged by \$2,401,760 in other, private funds to complete five priority acquisitions. The balance of Phase 7 funds will be spent on habitat restoration on a priority parcel recently acquired for the Rapids Lake Unit.



After acquisition, the Trust completes habitat restoration and enhancement work. Agricultural fields are restored to their native conditions of wetland, grassland and prairie habitat. Oak savanna, forest and prairie are enhanced through invasive species removal, seeding and prescribed fire.

Upon completion of initial habitat work, the land is conveyed to the USFWS and opened to the public for wildlife-based recreation, including hunting, fishing, hiking, wildlife observation, wildlife interpretation and photography.



*Entrance to the Rapids Lake Unit in Carver County at a hunter parking lot.*

**Stretching nearly 70 miles along the Minnesota River from Fort Snelling to Henderson, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge is a unique resource accessible to more than 3 million residents of the expanding Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The Refuge covers 14,000 acres of land and water, providing valuable habitat for a diversity of waterfowl and other migratory birds, fish and resident wildlife.**

Numerous distinctive units of the Refuge and Wetland Management District range from urban to suburban and rural. They offer a variety of free wildlife-related recreational opportunities, from hiking, interpretation, bird watching and photography to hunting and fishing.

The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge also manages a 14-county Wetland Management District with more than 8,000 acres of land dedicated to wildlife and wildlife-dependent recreation. The District includes more than 25 Waterfowl

Production Areas and 50 easements on private lands. Each of these areas is critically important to migrating, breeding and nesting waterfowl. They also provide habitat for grassland birds, such as meadowlark and bobolink, and a variety of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and other creatures.

Printable maps that detail access points, parking lots and trails on each of the Refuge Units and Waterfowl Production Areas are available on the Refuge website - [www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota\\_valley/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota_valley/).

Hunting and fishing are allowed on most Refuge Units. Hunting is allowed on all Waterfowl Production Areas.

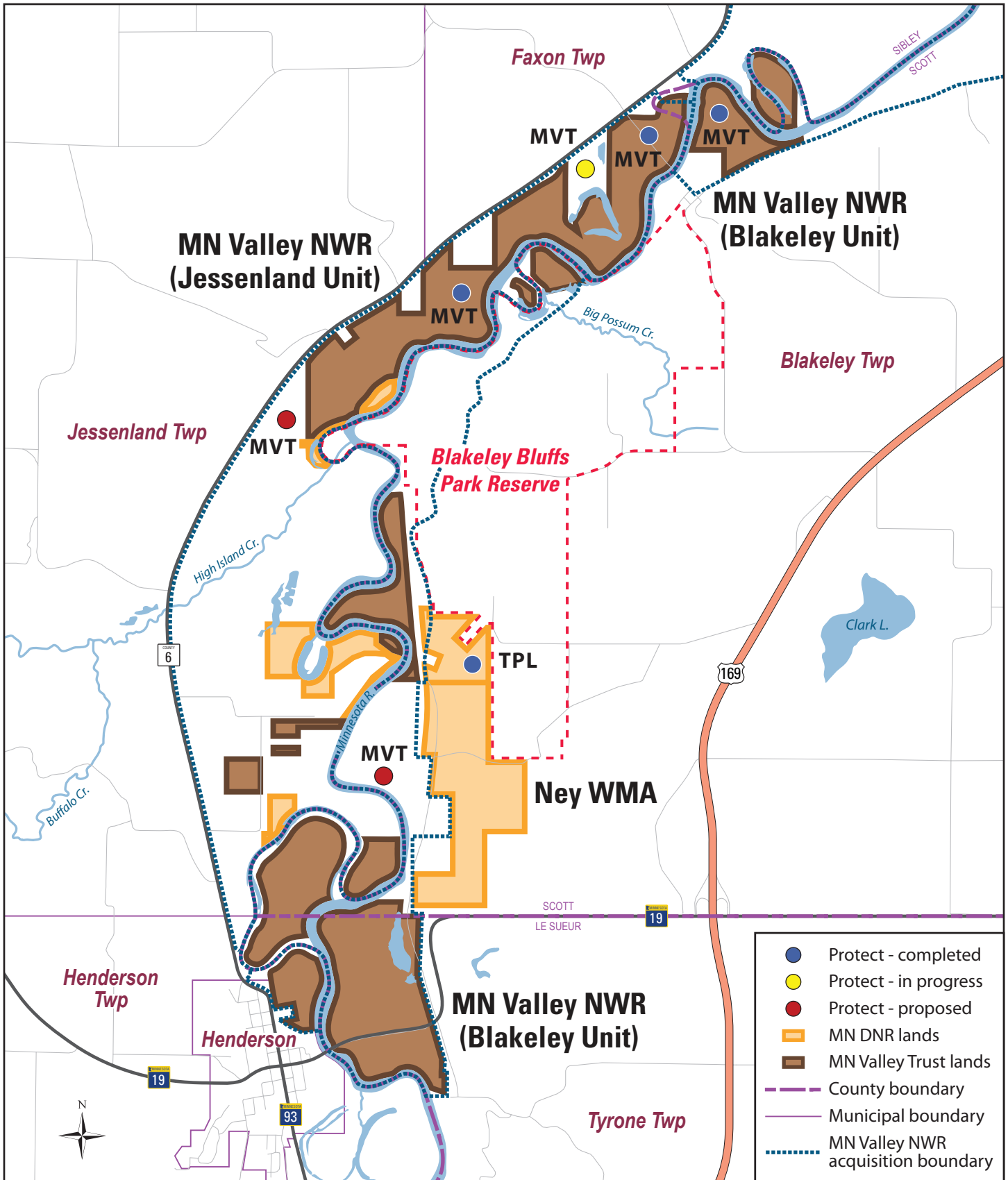
Two Refuge Education and Visitor Centers are open to the public and available for school and other groups for educational purposes. They are located in east Bloomington near the airport and Fort Snelling (3815 East American Boulevard) and near Carver (15865 Rapids Lake Road).

*Refuge unit maps showing Trust acquisition activity and unit boundaries are on the following pages.*



# Metro Big Rivers Habitat Partnership

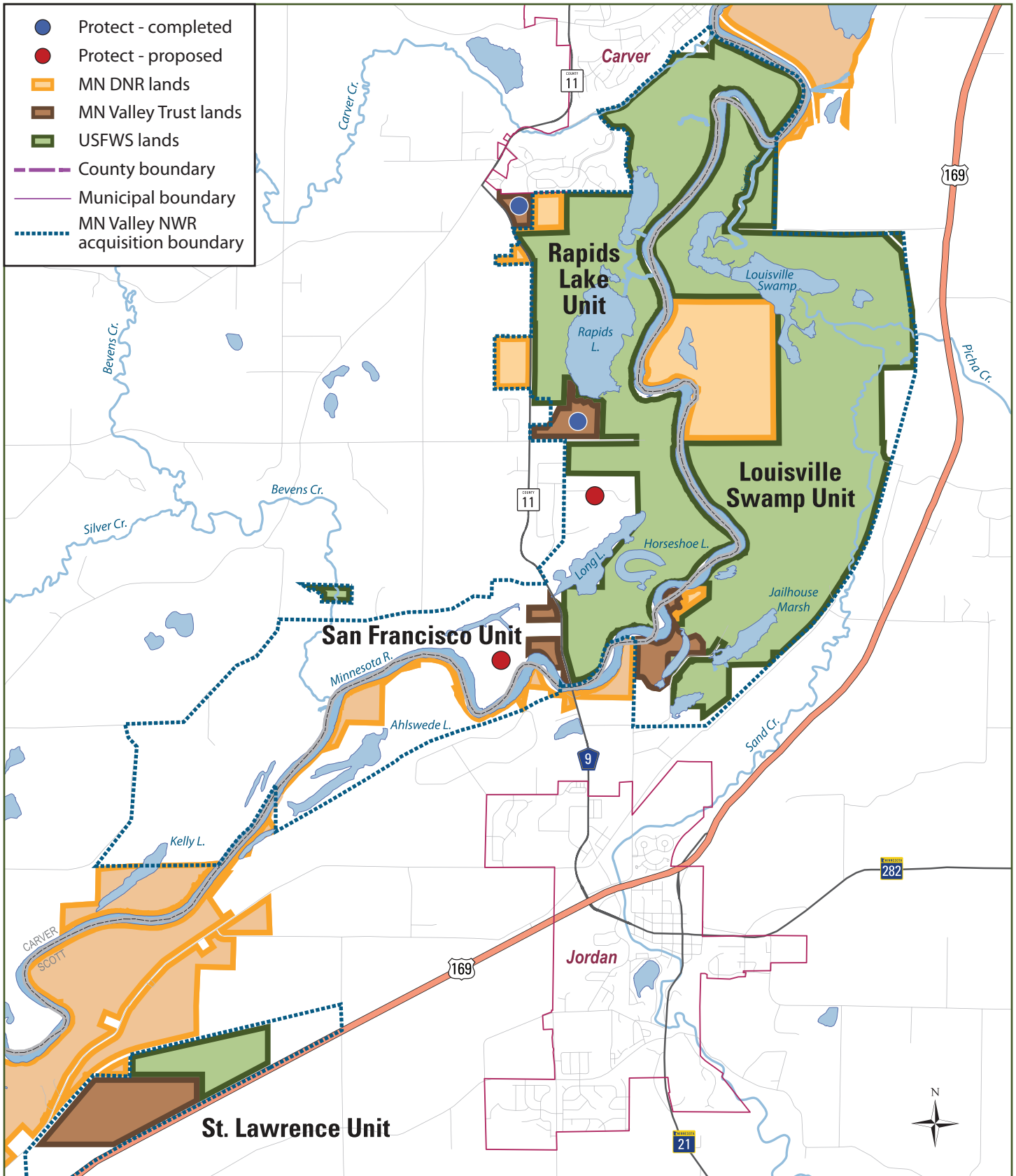
## Phase 10



	Protect - completed
	Protect - in progress
	Protect - proposed
	MN DNR lands
	MN Valley Trust lands
	County boundary
	Municipal boundary
	MN Valley NWR acquisition boundary

# Metro Big Rivers Habitat Partnership

## Phase 10



# Metro Big Rivers

The Trust for Public Land is working to permanently protect high-quality habitat for fish and wildlife along the Mississippi, Minnesota, and St. Croix rivers and their tributaries in the Twin Cities region. In addition to safeguarding the diversity of threatened ecosystems, this work provides close-to-home public access for hunting and fishing for millions of Minnesotans, and creates natural connections between wildlife habitat corridors.

The Metro Big Rivers program is unique due to its proximity to the Twin Cities. Despite the impacts of development in the metropolitan urbanizing area, high-quality riparian, forest, wetland and grassland habitat remain. By protecting these threatened lands, we are able to create close-to-home opportunities for millions of Minnesotans to experience a variety of wildlife-based recreation opportunities. To date, The Trust for Public Land has protected 1,703 acres through eight acquisitions with support from the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

## How we work

In partnership with several conservation organizations, The Trust for Public Land is proactively working with communities, and local and state government to **expand, restore, enhance, and connect quality habitat in the metropolitan/urbanizing area**. Through fee-title acquisition, The Trust for Public Land is protecting high-priority property to conserve habitat and provide land for people to get outside and enjoy. Funding comes from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, foundations, and individual contributions.



## Examples of our work

- **William H. Houlton Conservation Area:** With seven miles of shoreline at the confluence of the Mississippi and Elk Rivers, this 335 acre property was previously one of the largest pieces of unprotected land along this stretch of the Mississippi River. Now the area's floodplain forest, oak savanna, and restored prairie will provide outstanding opportunities for public hunting and fishing.
- **Blakely Bluffs:** Blakely Bluffs is a 128-acre area with large swaths of forest and blufflands with stunning views bordering the Minnesota River. Protected by The Trust for Public Land as an addition to Ney Wildlife Management Area, this beautiful land is now publically accessible for hunting and wildlife observation.
- **Grass Lake Wildlife Management Area Addition:** This property consists of wetlands, rolling hills, forested areas, and agricultural land that will be restored to prairie. Protecting these 116 acres will advance efforts to restore a drained wetland and improve water quality. Home to species including deer and pheasant, it provides excellent hunting and wildlife observation opportunities.



The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

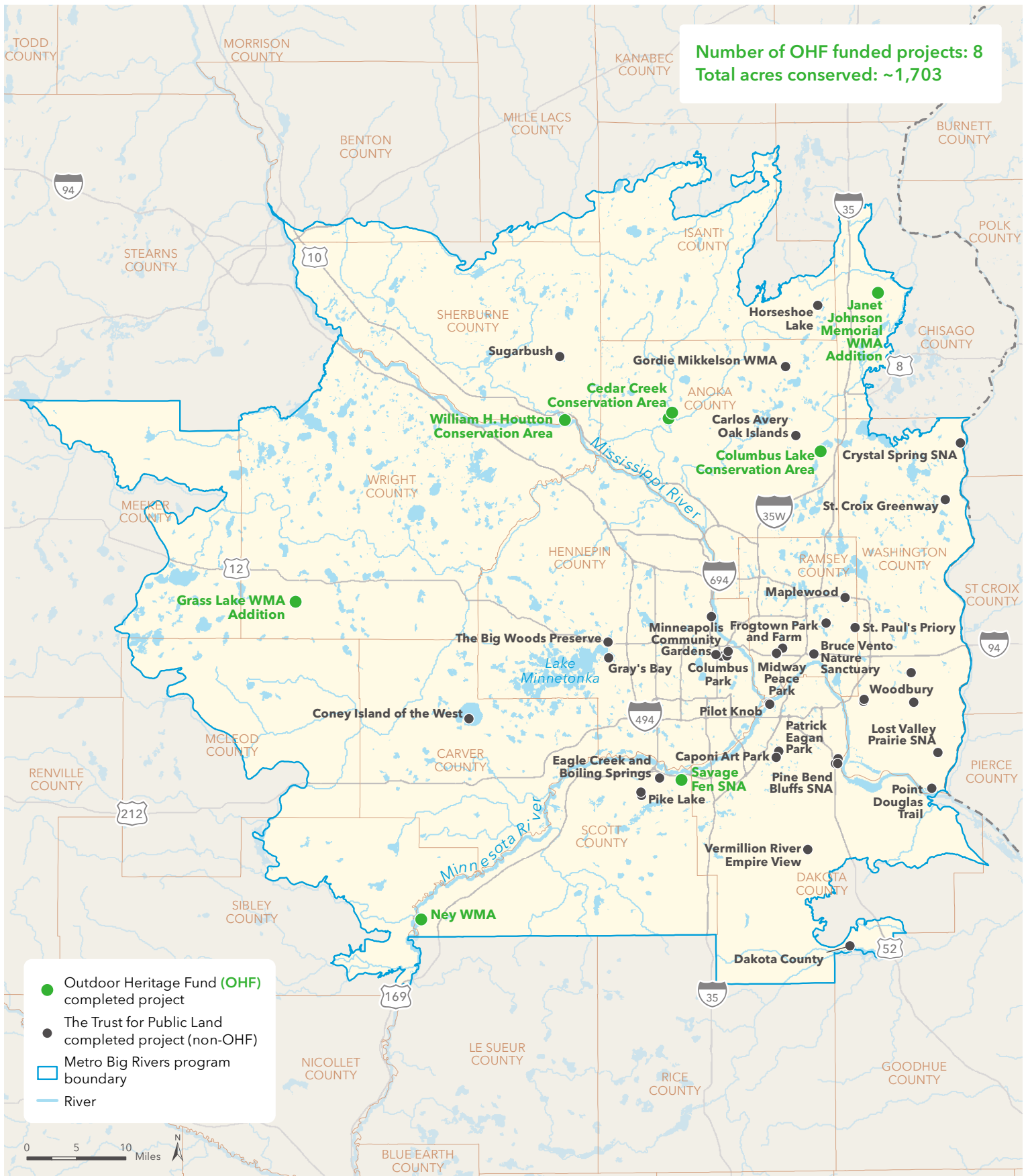
[tpl.org](http://tpl.org)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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PHOTOS: Andy Richter  
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# Metro Big Rivers

## MINNESOTA RIVERS: SUB-PROGRAMS

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*Springbrook Nature Center Oak Savanna/Woodland Enhancement (ML2013)*

## Supplemental Information for Metro Big Rivers 10 Projects Great River Greening ML2020



RESTORING LAND, WATER, AND WONDER





Great River Greening’s mission is to inspire, engage, and lead local communities in conserving and caring for the land and water that enrich our lives.

We focus on locations and activities that offer conservation impact, ecosystem services, and community benefits. While we started in Saint Paul, we now have projects throughout Minnesota.

Current priorities for Great River Greening include critical lands and waters in the Metro Area, endangered habitat in the Anoka Sand Plain region of east-central Minnesota, conserving water quality in our state-designated wild and scenic rivers, and collaborating with farmers in agricultural watersheds.

Great River Greening’s enhancement and restoration projects in this proposal will be on various types of protected lands -- local, state and protected under easement. Several of the sites are on public land that contain the label “park.” The habitat enhancements proposed are all areas of significant natural resource value for wildlife habitat and not parks in the traditional sense.

While not all of the project sites are open to public hunting and fishing, these parcels are part of habitat corridors that provide important habitat connections through the urban core for various game species and migratory species as they move across the landscape.



**20+ years of community-based Restoration and Enhancement.**

**Through the Outdoor Heritage Fund, as a member of Metro Big Rivers Partnership, Great River Greening has enhanced 790 acres and is actively enhancing another 818 acres.**

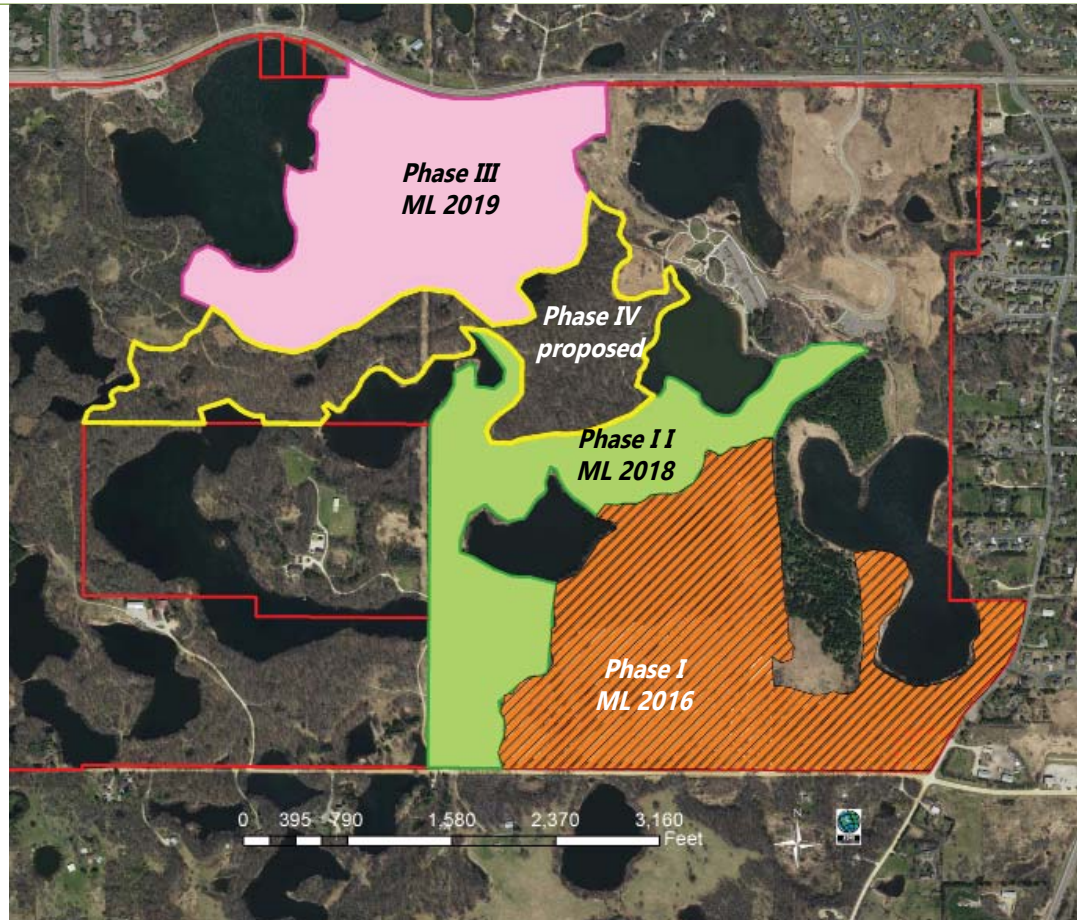
**Overall, Great River Greening has:**

**Restored and Enhanced over 17,500 acres and counting.**

**Engaged with 40,000 volunteers to protect, restore and care for Minnesota’s Natural Heritage.**

**RESTORING LAND, WATER, AND WONDER**

# Lebanon Hills Phase IV, Dakota County



Phase IV at Lebanon Hills will:

Enhance 80 acres of Oak Woodland through invasive tree removal and treatment, selective tree thinning of undesirable tree species, and seeding and planting in the understory.

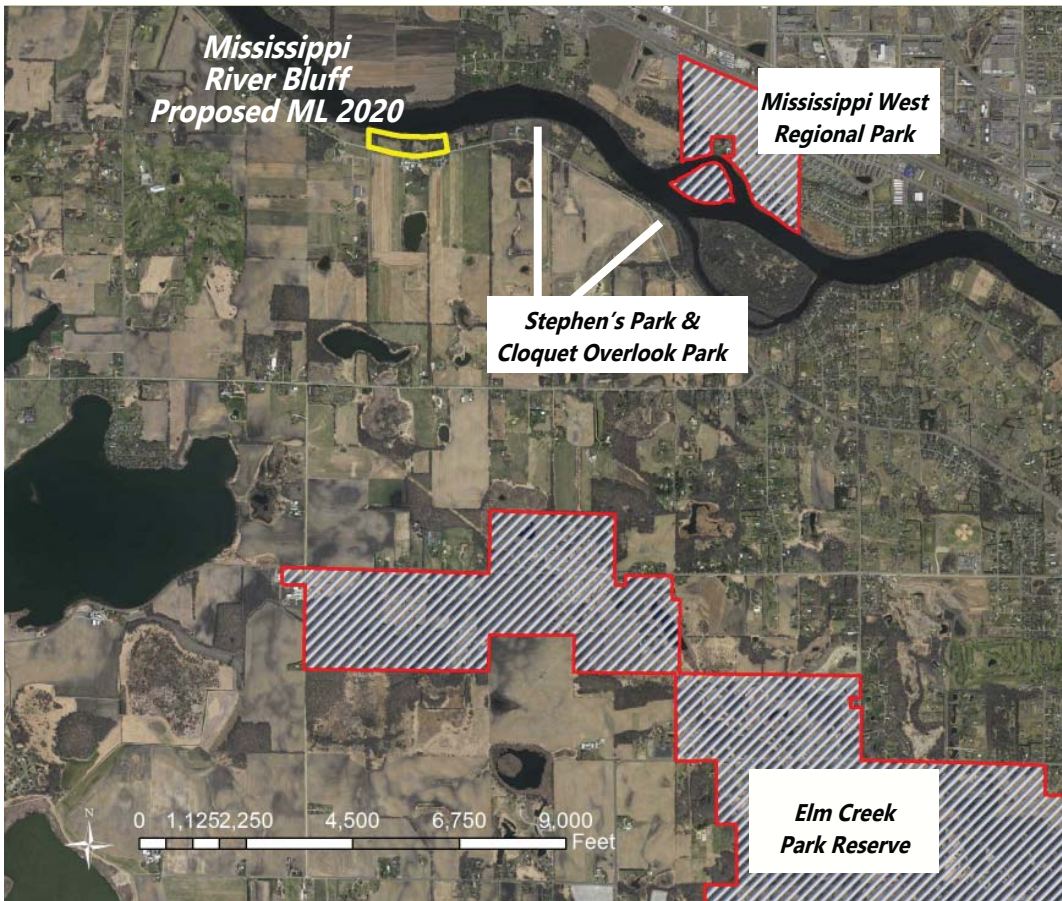
On comparable projects, there has been an increase in native woodland bird species inhabiting the complex. Removal of exotic species, such as buckthorn, has resulted in an increase in ground cover, which benefits invertebrate pollinator species.



*Phase I (ML2016): Before and After Winter 2017/18 Buckthorn removal and selective canopy thinning*



# Mississippi River Bluff, Hennepin County



The Mississippi River Bluff project area includes parcels that are part of a larger planned habitat corridor by Three Rivers Park District. The corridor will connect Elm Creek Park Reserve to the Mississippi River Corridor system and associated local parks along the river through Dayton, Champlin and Brooklyn Park.

This project will:

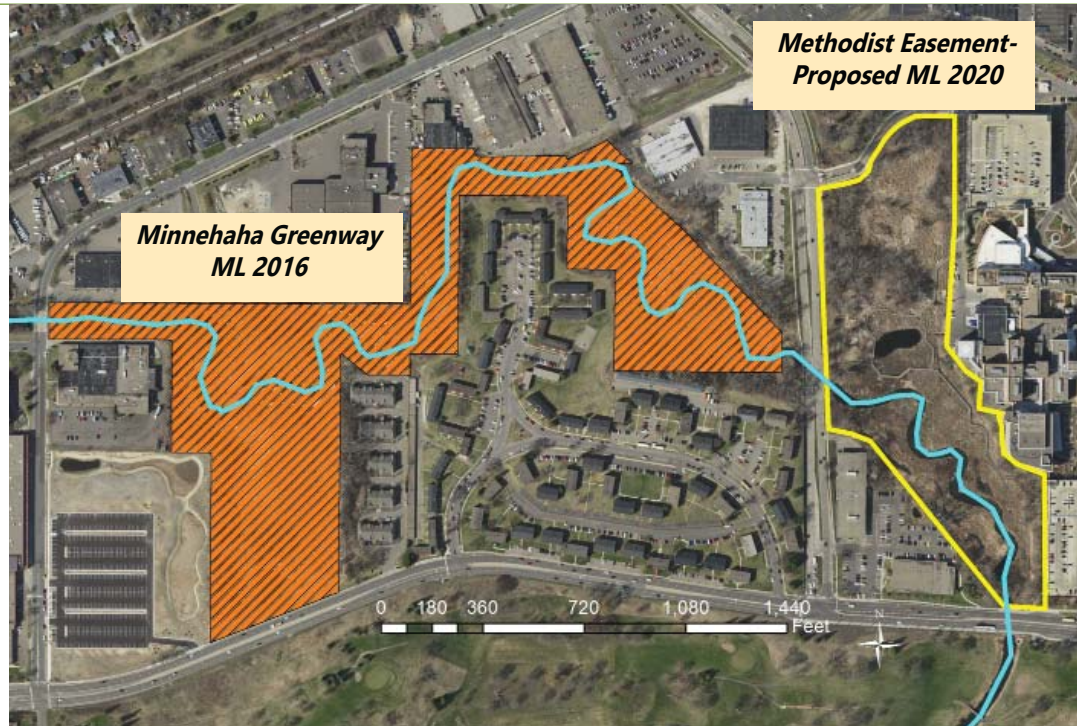
- Restore 20 acres of fallow fields to prairie habitat with associated forest and woodland enhancement.

- Increase pollinator habitat along the Mississippi River corridor.

Note: any acres where a future proposed trail will be installed have been taken into account and will not be funded with LSOHC funds.

RESTORING LAND, WATER, AND WONDER

# Minnehaha Greenway - Methodist, Hennepin County



Minnehaha Greenway - Methodist Easement lies along Minnehaha Creek, which was recently re-meandered by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD). The easement is on land owned by Methodist Hospital and held by MCWD.

This project continues habitat enhancement that is being completed on the Greenway (ML 2016) to the west across Louisiana Avenue.

This project will:

- Enhance 15 acres of native riverine forest and wetland habitat along Minnehaha Creek.

- Work will include removal of invasive species and planting of native shrub and tree species. Plantings will include herbivory protection to protect against beaver and muskrat activity.



# Vadnais-Sucker Lake, Ramsey County



The project area is located on 45 acres of wetland adjacent to Vadnais and Sucker Lake. Not only does this property provide important habitat for urban wildlife, it is also part of the Saint Paul drinking water reservoir system.

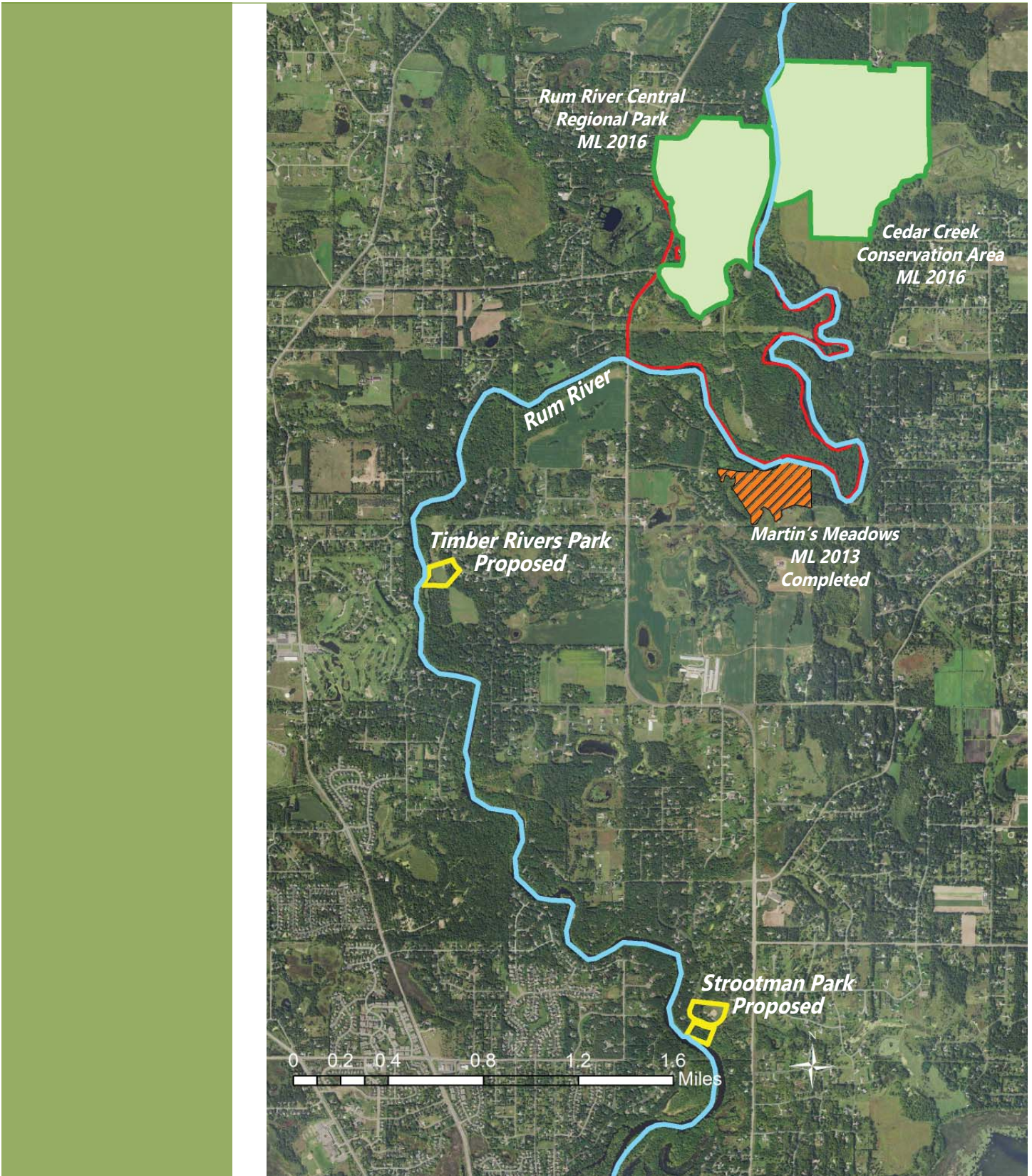
This project will:

Focus on two key areas - one on the northwest side of Sucker Lake and the other on the north shore of East Vadnais Lake. The total area involved is 45 acres. These areas were selected because habitat encroachment of buckthorn into wetland areas is pronounced and allows for follow up management. Project partners will be able to monitor and maintain effectively following buckthorn removal.

As a follow up to the invasive species removal the vegetation will also be augmented with a pollinator-friendly native seed mix.



# Timber Rivers & Strootman Park, Anoka County



RESTORING LAND, WATER, AND WONDER

# Timber Rivers & Strootman Park, Anoka County



Timber Rivers and Strootman Park are both located along the Rum River in the City of Andover. Both of these sites are part of the City's commitment to enhance this critical habitat corridor along the Rum River.

The City and Great River Greening completed habitat enhancement last year at Martin's Meadows Open Space (ML 2013) upstream from both sites and across the river from Rum River Regional Park.

The removal and treatment of woody invasives along the Rum River corridor will allow a higher diversity of native species to take hold and continue to stabilize the soils along the river corridor. The soils under the currently buckthorn-infested areas are exposed with lack of ground plain vegetation.

At Timber Rivers Park, Great River Greening will:

- Restore a 5-acre ball field to native prairie through turf conversion to provide improved pollinator habitat.

- Enhance 5 acres of forest habitat through woody invasive removal and native shrub and tree planting.

At Strootman Park, Great River Greening will:

- Enhance 10 acres of forest habitat through woody invasive removal and selective tree thinning.



Supplemental Information for Projects  
by  
Friends of the Mississippi River  
MBR10





Before



After



**Previous FMR restoration at Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park**

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) has been conducting ecological restoration and land protection in the Twin Cities metropolitan area for 25 years. FMR's goal is to add functional forest, wetland, prairie habitat for wildlife, fish and Species of Greatest Conservation Need. During FMR's 25 years, we have restored 2,500 acres at more than 60 sites, and permanently protected 2,044 acres at 30 sites.



FMR's restoration projects in this proposal are on ecologically important public land that sometimes contain the word "park" in their names. However, the restoration sites are not parks in the traditional sense, but rather natural areas that provide habitat for wildlife.

With the restoration work proposed here, the wildlife habitat value on these lands will be greatly enhanced. In addition:

- Most are sites that provide access for fishing.
- While not directly open for hunting, these lands provide important reserve habitat for game species such as pheasants, waterfowl and deer.



Restored prairie plants and pollinator habitat  
at some of FMR's sites



**Through Metro Big Rivers 10, FMR will enhance 220 acres at three sites on or near the Mississippi River in the Metro Urbanizing Area.**

Activities will include removal of invasive woody and herbaceous plants, spot-mowing, spot-spraying, prescribed burns and seeding. Work will be complete at the following sites:

- Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park Enhance 116 acres of oak forest, 5 acres of native bluff prairie and 1 acre of restored prairie.
- Riverside Park – St. Paul Park Enhance 13 acres of oak forest and 1 acre of savanna.
- Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area Enhance 50 acres of oak forest, 20 acres of restored prairie, and 14 acres of native prairie.



All of the project sites are located on or near the Mississippi River, within an Audubon-designated Important Bird Area.

This corridor provides critical habitat for neotropical migrant birds and numerous Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN).

FMR has tracked 11 breeding bird SGCN at these sites.

The sites are also vital for many other species, especially native pollinators, and provide connectivity to other natural areas.



Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area where Dickcissel, a SGCN, have been observed.



# Restoration at Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park

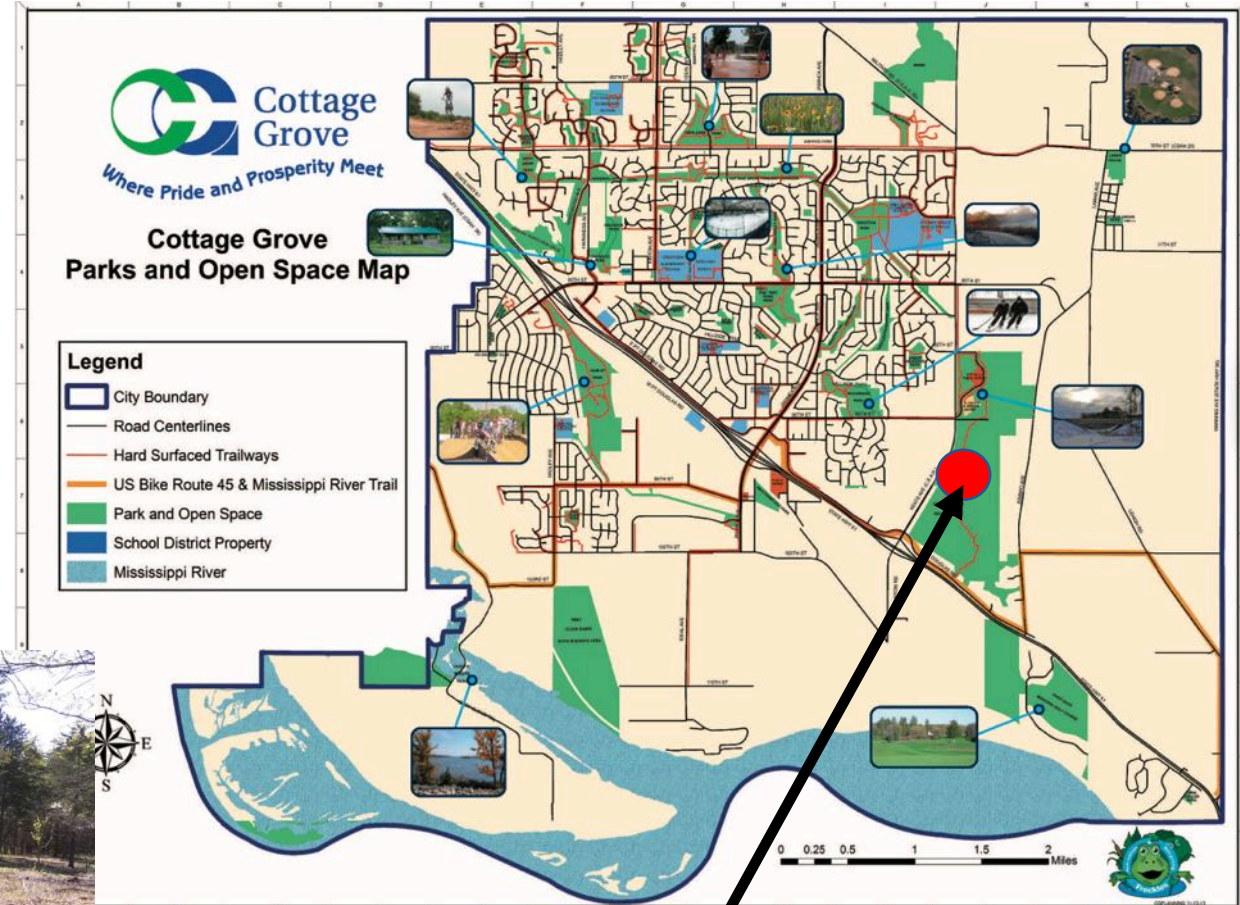
Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park is 515 acres, including important remnant bluff prairies, unique glacial tunnel valley geology, and three recorded SGCN bird species.

The park's lake provides fishing access.

This project will be FMR's third funded phase for the natural area. MBR10 will add 60 new acres of oak forest enhancement, nearly doubling the size of the project area.



Before and after - earlier phase of woodland restoration



Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park



# Restoration at Riverside Park, City of St. Paul Park

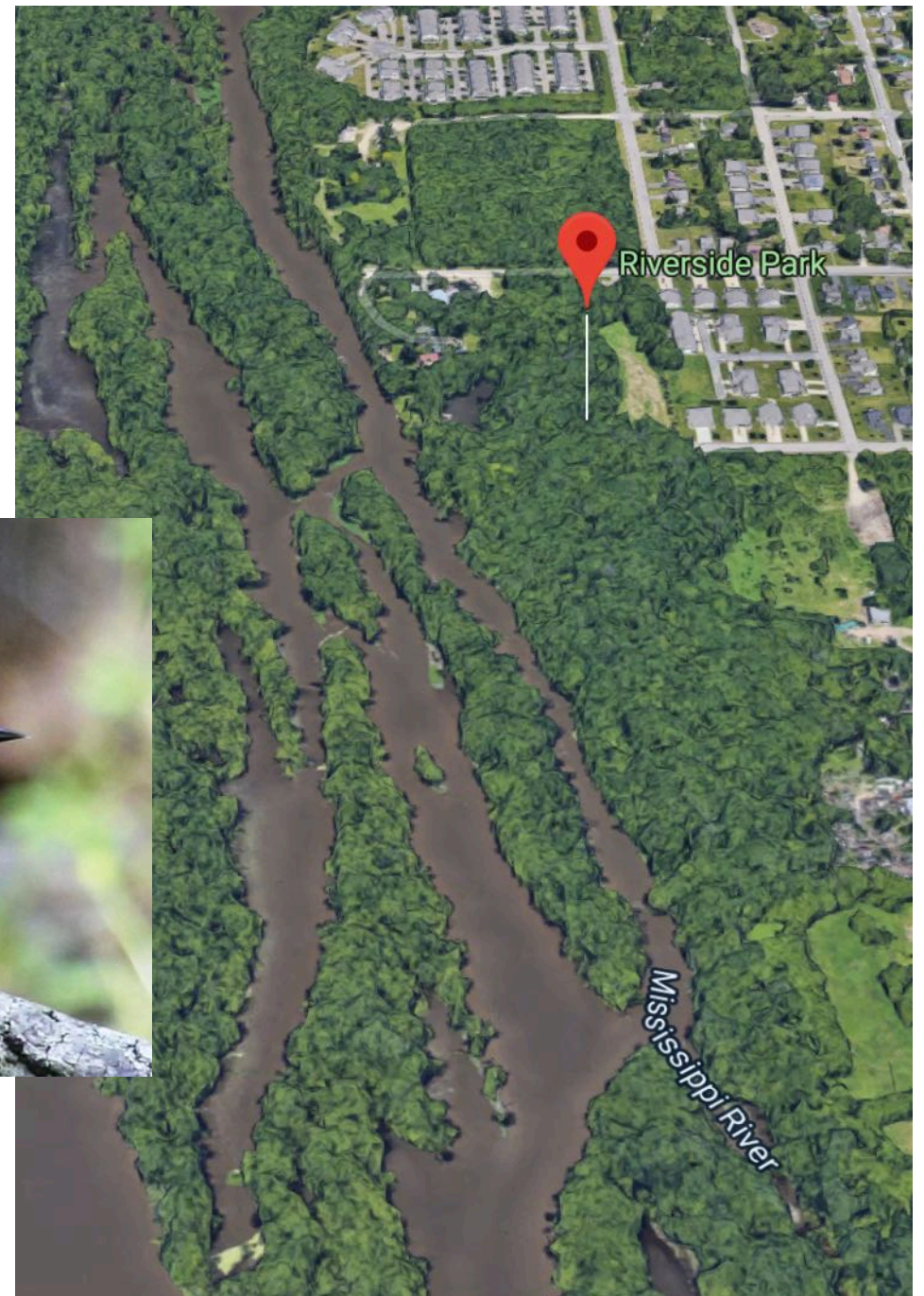
This 14-acre park is located on the backwaters of the Mississippi River.

FMR will enhance 13 acres of oak forest and 1 acre of savanna in a second phase of work that includes oak tree plantings.

Dozens of migratory bird species have been recorded at this site.



Golden-winged Warbler, a  
SGCN observed at Riverside  
Park





# Restoration at Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area

Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area is over 1,300 acres along the Mississippi River. It is connected to extensive acreage downstream, creating a wildlife corridor of high ecological value to the area.

The landscape at Pine Bend Bluff is diverse, with steep hills, deep ravines and riparian shores. It provides multiple habitats, from wetlands to oak forest to savanna and dry bluff prairie. These diverse habitats support a diversity of wildlife.



In this third phase of OHF-funded work, FMR will do follow-up management at areas where invasive woody removal has been initiated. Because invasive woody removal is a multi-year process, one cycle of funding only addresses the initial removal. Additional funding is critical to maintaining the work completed and ensure the site does not revert to prior conditions.

