



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

2022 Metro Big Rivers Phase 12

Laws of Minnesota 2022 Accomplishment Plan

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### General Information

**Date:** 01/05/2022

**Project Title:** 2022 Metro Big Rivers Phase 12

**Funds Recommended:** \$7,996,000

**Legislative Citation:** ML 2022, Ch. XX, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd.

**Appropriation Language:**

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Deborah Loon

**Title:** Executive Director

**Organization:** MN Valley Trust (Metro Big Rivers)

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### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Washington, Sherburne, Dakota, Hennepin, Scott, Ramsey, Sibley, Carver and Chisago.

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

- Metro / Urban

**Activity types:**

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

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Wetlands
- Prairie
- Forest
- Habitat

## Narrative

### Abstract

Metro Big Rivers Phase 12 will protect 622 acres in fee title and 319 acres in permanent conservation easement, restore 53 acres and enhance 564 acres of priority habitat in the big rivers corridors in the Metropolitan Urbanizing Area (1,558 acres total). Partners will leverage OHF grants at least 15% with partner funds, private donations, local government contributions, and landowner donations of easement value. Significant volunteer engagement will be invested in habitat enhancement activities. MBR projects benefit wildlife and species in greatest need of conservation (SGCN) and provide increased public access and nature connections for metro residents.

### Design and Scope of Work

Metro Big Rivers Phase 12 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. Metro Big Rivers' work in the metro area benefits wildlife and species in greatest need of conservation (SGCN), provides increased public access for wildlife-based recreation and connects the diversity of metro residents with nature near them.

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) will restore/enhance 410 acres at 4 sites on or near the Mississippi River. Projects include removing invasive woody and herbaceous plants, planting, seeding, mowing, spot-spraying, and prescribed burns.

- Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park: Enhance 104 acres oak forest
- Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area: Enhance 180 acres oak forest, 15 acres restored prairie, and 4 acres native prairie
- Vermillion Falls Park: Restore 4 acres prairie, enhance 13 acres forest
- William H. Houlton Conservation Area: Enhance 90 acres forest.

Great River Greening (GRG) will restore/enhance 157 acres across 7 sites. Projects include removing invasive woody and herbaceous species, mowing, spot spraying, seeding and planting.

- Bassett Creek Park: Enhance 22 acres forest
- Lebanon Hills Regional Park Phase IV: Enhance 50 acres oak savanna/woodland and prairie
- Spring Lake Park (Scott County): Enhance 10 acres oak forest
- LumberJack Landing: Restore 15 acres of forest and .25 miles of shoreline restoration of new public open space along the St Croix River
- Huber Park: Restore 9 acres of degraded floodplain forest along the Minnesota River
- Jim's Prairie: Enhance 11 acres of prairie
- Falls Creek SNA: Enhance 40 acres forest

Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) will protect through perpetual conservation easement 319 acres of priority habitat, including riparian lands, forests, wetlands and grasslands. Projects will be selected through a competitive process that ranks proposals based on ecological significance and cost (criteria attached).

MLT also will restore/enhance 50 acres on lands 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 through fee acquisition 352 acres of river frontage, floodplain forest, wetland and upland habitat to expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. All prospective lands have been prioritized by the USFWS and will be restored/enhanced, then open for wildlife-based recreation, including hunting and fishing.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) will protect through fee acquisition 270 acres of priority wildlife habitat, including riparian, forest, wetland and grassland habitat. Potential properties are prioritized in state, regional, and local natural resource plans. Lands will be managed by public partners (DNR and/or local government) and open for wildlife-based recreation, including hunting and fishing.

### **How does the plan 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 will conduct habitat enhancement at five sites 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 species of greatest conservation need. FMR has been tracking breeding bird species at these sites, recording 11 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 12 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 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.

## **Describe how the plan 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.

## **Which two sections of the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are most applicable to this project?**

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

## **Which two other plans are addressed in this program?**

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

## **Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?**

### **Metro / Urban**

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

## Does this program include leveraged funding?

Yes

### Explain the leverage:

Metro Big Rivers 12 will leverage the OHF appropriation with an estimated \$1,184,500 in other funds (almost 15%). The partnership has secured commitments of supplemental funding from the partners, private sources, local government units 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, over \$3,000,000 in easement value has been donated by landowners as leverage. MLT expects a significant landowner contribution to continue in MBR Phase 12; a conservative estimate of leverage is \$517,000.

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.

### Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain 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 request is not supplanting or substituting for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

### Non-OHF Appropriations

Year	Source	Amount
2020	Private	1,280,936
2020	Local	781,892
2020	Other State	581,340
2011	Private	1,578,572
2011	Local & Federal	543,900
2011	Other State	1,429,358
2010	Private	3,516,521
2010	Local & Federal	485,122
2010	Other State	2,010,658
2019	Private & Other	636,255
2019	Local	418,524
2019	Other State	381,241
2018	Private	2,025,433
2009	Private	940,884
2018	Local	253,321
2018	Other State	656,593
2017	Private & Other	1,278,433
2017	Local	739,800
2017	Other State	630,060
2016	Private	2,700,091
2016	Local & Federal	1,822,000
2016	Other State	912,867
2015	Private	1,449,198
2015	Local	1,295,000

2009	Local & Federal	230,310
2015	Other State	2,224,751
2014	Private	1,931,527
2014	Local	516,119
2014	Other State	1,873,857
2013	Private	1,253,038
2013	Local & Federal	1,320,606
2013	Other State	2,130,284
2012	Private & Other	2,063,388
2012	Local & Federal	413,561
2012	Other State	684,449
2009	Other State	741,058

### 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.

All MBR restore/enhance (FMR, GRG, MLT) partners will raise public and private sources and 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.

### Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Post-Acquisition, Ongoing	MVT, TPL, Public Partners	Post acquired property	Develop & implement habitat restoration and enhancement plans	Transfer property to public partner, steward
Ongoing	MLT Stewardship & Enforcement Fund	Annual monitoring of completed easements	Enforcement actions as necessary	-
Ongoing	FMR, GRG, MLT, Local	Monitoring and	Target actions, engage	Take restorative

	Partners, Private Landowners	assessment of restoration and enhancement projects	local partners and landowners	action to correct any damage
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### How will the program directly involve, engage, and benefit BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and diverse communities:

As organizations with long histories of working in the MUA, we are joined together by our shared objective of providing all metro residents with meaningful opportunities to engage with high-quality natural spaces nearby and live in healthy neighborhoods. Metro Big Rivers partners work in and with a diversity of communities ranging from urban to suburban and rural. We believe everyone should be able to easily connect with nature, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, and have opportunities to engage in activities that improve wildlife habitat in their neighborhoods.

Examples of how MBR engages and benefits BIPOC and diverse communities includes:

Friends of the Mississippi River and Great River Greening both have active volunteer engagement functions where much of their habitat work is done by residents who live near project sites. Their youth programming targets young people from diverse backgrounds and creates opportunities for exploring environmental careers.

Metro residents can literally step off the light rail or bus and into the wilderness on the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge to connect with nature and wildlife at no cost. The Refuge and Minnesota Valley Trust provide free busing for schools with a high percentage of low-income students, have a free lending program (e.g., snowshoes, fishing poles, field backpacks), and are building an internship program recruiting a diversity of youth to explore conservation careers.

Minnesota Land Trust prioritizes projects that protect camps and nature centers that historically served a diversity of Minnesota youth. For example, an easement was recently placed on Camp Katherine Parsons, which will enable the Phyllis Wheatley Community Center to expand its programming for North Minneapolis residents at the camp and simultaneously improve its wildlife habitat.

The Trust for Public Land directly works with and empowers diverse communities to put a park, trail or natural area within a 10-minute walk of every Twin Cities resident. Over the past 20 years, we've helped protect land and create natural areas such as the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, Frogtown Park and Farm, Midway Peace Park, Pilot Knob and many more natural spaces diverse communities enjoy.

### Activity Details

#### Requirements

**If funded, this program 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

**Describe any measures to inform local governments of land acquisition under their jurisdiction:**

Local units of government will be notified of pending fee title acquisitions, as required by law.

**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

**Who will manage the easement?**

Minnesota Land Trust

**Who will be the easement holder?**

Minnesota Land Trust

**What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**

5 to 8

**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

**Where does the activity take place?**

- Permanently Protected Conservation Easements
- County/Municipal
- SNA

## Land Use

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

Yes

**Explain what will be planted:**

Easement Acquisition:

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

**Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:**

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.

**Who will eventually own the fee title land?**

- Federal
- State of MN
- County

**Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:**

- National Wildlife Refuge
- SNA
- WMA
- AMA

**What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**

3 to 6

**Will the eased land be open for public use?**

No

**Are there currently trails or roads on any of the proposed acquisitions?**

Yes

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

We are not aware of any trails or roads at this time, although some parcels acquired in fee title may have existing field roads or low maintenance trails. Properties identified and prioritized for protection through conservation easements often have trails and roads on them; private landowners typically will be allowed to use those trails/roads on their property.

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

Yes

**How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?**

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.

Any pre-existing low-maintenance roads and trails on properties acquired 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).

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

**Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?**

No

At this time, we do not anticipate restoring or enhancing the parcels acquired with this appropriation. If our plans change in this regard, we will seek an amendment in the future.

**Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this program's funding and availability?**

No

**Explain how, when, and source of the R/E work:**

Restoration and enhancement needs associated with fee title and easement projects completed under this grant will be assessed. Needs identified will be addressed through private sources, Conservation Partners Legacy Grant proposals and/or future funding proposals to LSOHC. If funds remain in this grant, an amendment may be submitted to allow those funds to be reallocated to restoration and enhancement on lands protected by this grant.

Lands protected via easement will be assessed as to their need for R/E work by the Land Trust's Restoration Program. If R/E needs are identified, they will be built into future funding proposals.

**Timeline**

<b>Activity Name</b>	<b>Estimated Completion Date</b>
TPL - Protect 270 acres through fee title acquisition	June 2026
MVT - Protect 352 acres through fee title acquisition	June 2026

MLT - Protect 319 acres under conservation easement	June 2026
MLT - Restore 25 acres and enhance 25 acres	June 2027
GRG - Restore 24 acres and enhance 133 acres	June 2027
FMR - Restore 4 acres and enhance 406 acres	June 2027

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 11/01/2027

**Budget**

*Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan.*

**Grand Totals Across All Partnerships**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Funding Request</b>	<b>Antic. Leverage</b>	<b>Leverage Source</b>	<b>Total</b>
Personnel	\$604,500	\$118,000	-, Dakota County, Stillwater, Shakopee, Maplewood, Crystal, Scott County, Private, Cities, foundations	\$722,500
Contracts	\$1,167,500	-	-	\$1,167,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$2,557,500	\$50,000	RIM, Private	\$2,607,500
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$1,093,000	\$275,000	-, Private	\$1,368,000
Easement Acquisition	\$1,725,000	\$517,000	-, Private landowners	\$2,242,000
Easement Stewardship	\$216,000	-	-	\$216,000
Travel	\$20,000	\$2,000	-, Private	\$22,000
Professional Services	\$277,000	-	-	\$277,000
Direct Support Services	\$158,000	\$219,500	-, Private, Private	\$377,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$25,000	-	-	\$25,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$8,000	-	-	\$8,000
Supplies/Materials	\$109,500	\$3,000	-, Cities, foundations	\$112,500
DNR IDP	\$35,000	-	-	\$35,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$7,996,000</b>	<b>\$1,184,500</b>	-	<b>\$9,180,500</b>

**Partner: Trust for Public Land**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$110,000	-	-	\$110,000
Contracts	\$38,000	-	-	\$38,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$2,557,500	\$50,000	RIM, Private	\$2,607,500
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	\$2,000	Private	\$2,000
Professional Services	\$55,000	-	-	\$55,000
Direct Support Services	\$36,500	\$36,500	Private	\$73,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$18,000	-	-	\$18,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	\$35,000	-	-	\$35,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$2,850,000</b>	<b>\$88,500</b>	-	<b>\$2,938,500</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
TPL Staff (Protection and Legal)	0.22	3.0	\$110,000	-	-	\$110,000

**Partner: Minnesota Valley Trust**

**Totals**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Funding Request</b>	<b>Antic. Leverage</b>	<b>Leverage Source</b>	<b>Total</b>
Personnel	-	-	-	-
Contracts	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$1,093,000	\$275,000	Private	\$1,368,000
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$7,000	-	-	\$7,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,100,000</b>	<b>\$275,000</b>	-	<b>\$1,375,000</b>

## Partner: Minnesota Land Trust

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$282,000	-	-	\$282,000
Contracts	\$175,000	-	-	\$175,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$1,725,000	\$517,000	Private landowners	\$2,242,000
Easement Stewardship	\$216,000	-	-	\$216,000
Travel	\$11,000	-	-	\$11,000
Professional Services	\$222,000	-	-	\$222,000
Direct Support Services	\$76,500	-	-	\$76,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$1,500	-	-	\$1,500
Supplies/Materials	\$2,000	-	-	\$2,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$2,711,000</b>	<b>\$517,000</b>	-	<b>\$3,228,000</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MLT Restoration Staff	0.3	4.0	\$102,000	-	-	\$102,000
MLT Protection Staff	0.47	4.0	\$180,000	-	-	\$180,000

**Partner: Friends of the Mississippi River**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$71,800	\$48,000	Cities, foundations	\$119,800
Contracts	\$491,300	-	-	\$491,300
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$3,900	-	-	\$3,900
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	\$38,000	\$3,000	Cities, foundations	\$41,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$605,000</b>	<b>\$51,000</b>	-	<b>\$656,000</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
FMR Staff (Ecologists, Conservation Director, Stewardship staff, Bookkeeper, College intern)	0.37	5.0	\$71,800	\$48,000	Cities, foundations	\$119,800



**Partner: Great River Greening****Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$140,700	\$70,000	Dakota County, Stillwater, Shakopee, Maplewood, Crystal, Scott County, Private	\$210,700
Contracts	\$463,200	-	-	\$463,200
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$5,100	-	-	\$5,100
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$45,000	\$183,000	Private	\$228,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$6,500	-	-	\$6,500
Supplies/Materials	\$69,500	-	-	\$69,500
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$730,000</b>	<b>\$253,000</b>	-	<b>\$983,000</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
GRG Staff (Ecologist, technicians, etc.)	0.38	5.0	\$140,700	\$70,000	Dakota County, Stillwater, Shakopee, Maplewood, Crystal, Scott County, Private	\$210,700

**Amount of Request:** \$7,996,000

**Amount of Leverage:** \$1,184,500

**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 14.81%

**DSS + Personnel:** \$762,500

**As a % of the total request:** 9.54%

**Easement Stewardship:** \$216,000

**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** 12.52%

**How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?**

Metro Big Rivers partners have reduced the number of projects and acres to accommodate the lower appropriation recommendation.

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

Leverage includes expected donated easement value by landowners, possible partial donation of fee title value by

landowners, committed partner and other private funds, committed and anticipated city, county, park district and RIM funds.

## Personnel

**Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?**

Yes

**Please explain the overlap of past and future staffing and position levels previously received and how that is coordinated over multiple years?**

FTEs listed in the proposal are an estimate of the personnel time required to deliver the grant outputs included in this proposal. An array of staff work on projects to complete project planning, sub-contracting, negotiating with landowners, drafting conservation easements, completing baseline reports and managing the grant. Our basis for billing is the individual Protection or Restoration project we work on, ensuring allocation to the appropriate grant award. By using a timesheet based approach, we use only those personnel funds actually expended to achieve the goals of the grant.

## Contracts

**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, posting of easement boundaries (MLT). Potential site clean-up and initial restoration activities (TPL).

## Fee Acquisition

**What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?**

3 to 6

## Easement Stewardship

**What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?**

MLT's budget is based on closing an anticipated 5-8 conservation easements. The average cost per easement to fund the Minnesota Land Trust's perpetual monitoring and enforcement obligations is \$24,000, although in extraordinary circumstances additional funds may be warranted. This figure is derived from MLT's detailed stewardship funding "cost analysis" which is consistent with Land Trust Accreditation standards. MLT shares periodic updates to this cost analysis with LSOHC staff.

## Travel

**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

**I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:**

Yes

## Direct Support Services

### **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 has been approved by the DNR in September 2019, GRG's DSS rate includes the allowable direct and necessary expenditures that are not captured in other line items in the budget. A portion, not exceeding 50%, of these costs are requested from the grant and the balance is contributed as leverage. 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 by the DNR. 50% of these costs are requested from the grant, 50% is contributed as leverage.

## Other Equipment/Tools

### **Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?**

GPS unit, post pounders, hand tools, saws, brush cutters, and other necessary equipment to complete land protection, restoration and enhancement activities.

## Federal Funds

### **Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?**

No

## Output Tables

### Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	-	4	24	25	53
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	100	85	85	-	270
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	80	136	136	-	352
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	319	319
Enhance	-	30	509	25	564
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>1,558</b>

### How many of these Prairie acres are Native Prairie? (Table 1b)

Type	Native Prairie (acres)
Restore	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-
Protect in Easement	-
Enhance	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>

### Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	\$32,600	\$156,700	\$123,000	\$312,300
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$1,055,600	\$897,200	\$897,200	-	\$2,850,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$250,000	\$425,000	\$425,000	-	\$1,100,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	\$2,465,000	\$2,465,000
Enhance	-	\$48,000	\$1,097,700	\$123,000	\$1,268,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,305,600</b>	<b>\$1,402,800</b>	<b>\$2,576,600</b>	<b>\$2,711,000</b>	<b>\$7,996,000</b>

### Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	53	-	-	-	-	53
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	270	-	-	-	-	270
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	352	-	-	-	-	352
Protect in Easement	319	-	-	-	-	319
Enhance	564	-	-	-	-	564
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,558</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,558</b>

### Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	\$312,300	-	-	-	-	\$312,300
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$2,850,000	-	-	-	-	\$2,850,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$1,100,000	-	-	-	-	\$1,100,000
Protect in Easement	\$2,465,000	-	-	-	-	\$2,465,000
Enhance	\$1,268,700	-	-	-	-	\$1,268,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,996,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$7,996,000</b>

### Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
------	---------	---------	--------	---------

Restore	-	\$8,150	\$6,529	\$4,920
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$10,556	\$10,555	\$10,555	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$3,125	\$3,125	\$3,125	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	\$7,727
Enhance	-	\$1,600	\$2,156	\$4,920

### Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	\$5,892	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$10,555	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$3,125	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$7,727	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$2,249	-	-	-	-

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

7.85

## 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 in Greatest Conservation Need.*

## Parcels

*For restoration and enhancement programs ONLY: Managers may add, delete, and substitute projects on this parcel list based upon need, readiness, cost, opportunity, and/or urgency so long as the substitute parcel/project forwards the constitutional objectives of this program in the Project Scope table of this accomplishment plan. The final accomplishment plan report will include the final parcel list.*

### Parcel Information

#### Sign-up Criteria?

[Yes](#)

#### Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:

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.

### Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
FMR - Vermillion Falls Park	Dakota	11517234	17	\$86,000	Yes
FMR - Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area	Dakota	02722227	199	\$270,000	Yes
GRG - Lebanon Hills Regional - Phase IV	Dakota	02723235	50	\$284,200	Yes
GRG - Bassett Creek Park	Hennepin	11821221	22	\$127,100	Yes
GRG- Jim's Prairie	Ramsey	02922224	11	\$24,900	Yes
GRG- Spring Lake Regional Park (Scott County)	Scott	11422204	10	\$57,100	Yes
GRG- Huber Park	Scott	11522206	9	\$54,700	Yes
FMR - William H. Houlton Conservation Area	Sherburne	03326233	90	\$182,000	Yes

GRG - Falls Creek SNA	Washington	03220212	40	\$80,000	Yes
FMR - Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park	Washington	02721233	104	\$67,000	Yes
GRG- Lumber Jack Landing	Washington	03020221	15	\$102,000	Yes
MLT - Saint Croix River S	Washington	02720214	40	\$80,000	Yes
MLT - Keystone Woods T	Washington	03121212	40	\$80,000	Yes
MLT - Carnelian Creek M	Washington	03120221	20	\$40,000	Yes
MLT - Keystone Woods H	Washington	03121213	35	\$70,000	Yes
MLT - Ward Springs	Washington	03120201	18	\$80,000	Yes

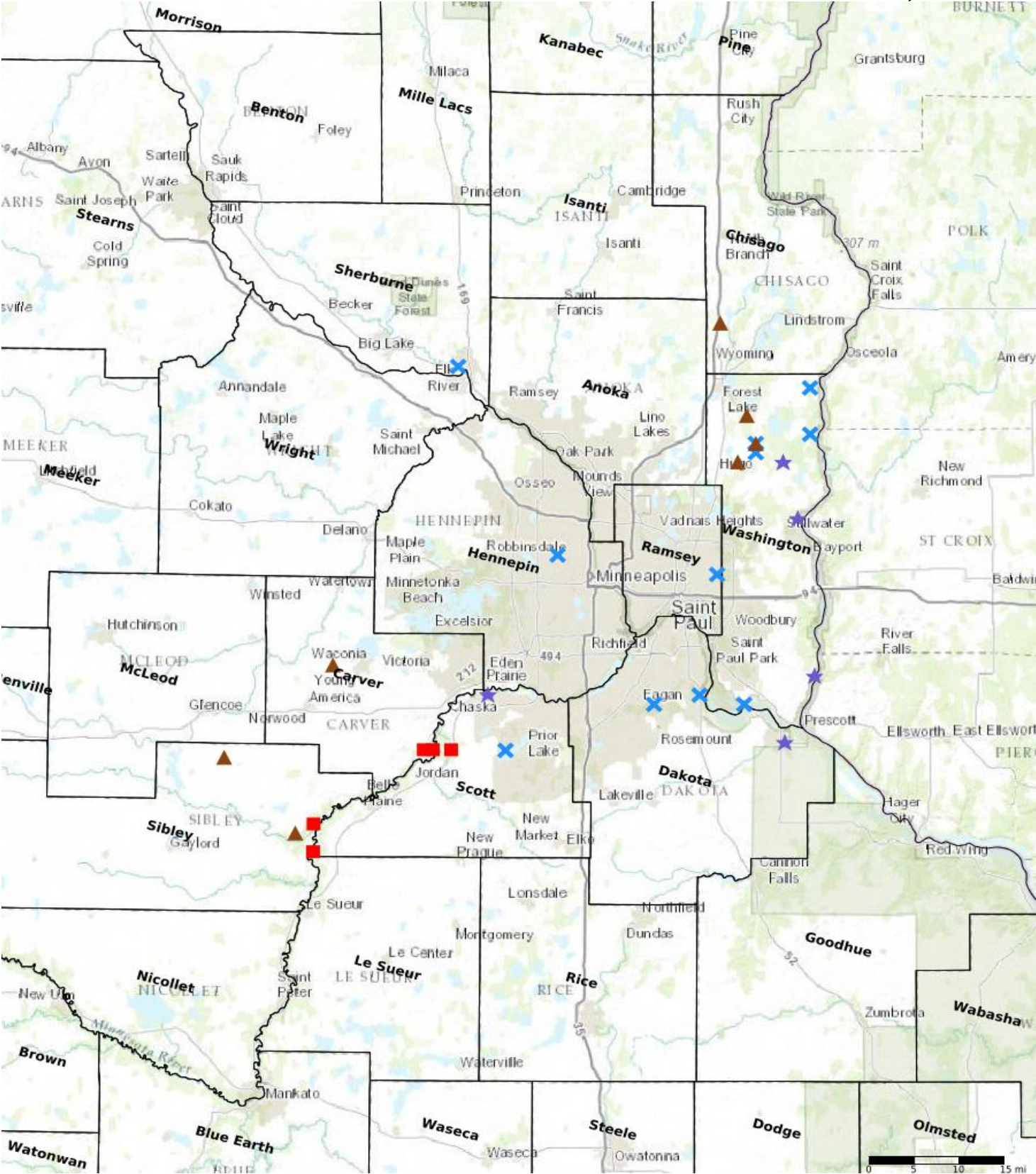
### Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
TPL - Patterson Lake WMA Addition	Carver	11625220	650	\$4,500,000	No
MVT - Rapids Lake Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Carver	11423206	118	\$826,000	No
MVT - San Francisco Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Carver	11424201	168	\$546,000	No
TPL - Carlos Avery WMA Addition	Chisago	03321205	60	\$80,000	No
MVT - Blakeley Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Scott	11326236	194	\$630,500	No
TPL - Vale WMA Addition	Sibley	11326222	165	\$550,000	No
MVT - Jessenland Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Sibley	11326213	200	\$650,000	No
TPL - Severance Lake WMA Addition	Sibley	11427208	102	\$525,000	No
TPL - Keystone Woods	Washington	03121212	500	\$5,000,000	No
TPL - Paul Hugo Farms WMA Addition	Washington	03121222	230	\$1,000,000	No
TPL - Hardwood Creek WMA Addition	Washington	03221226	470	\$700,000	No

### Protect Parcels with Buildings

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Buildings	Value of Buildings
MVT - Louisville Swamp Unit Addition, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Scott	11423204	7	\$650,000	No	3	\$160,000





**Parcel Map**  
**2022 Metro Big Rivers Phase 12**  
**(Data Generated From Parcel List)**

- Protect in Easement
- ▲ Protect in Fee with PILT
- Protect in Fee W/O PILT
- ★ Restore
- ✕ Enhance
- + Other







## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

### Comparison Report

**Program Title:** ML 2022 - 2022 Metro Big Rivers Phase 12

**Organization:** MN Valley Trust (Metro Big Rivers)

**Manager:** Deborah Loon

### Budget

**Requested Amount:** \$13,822,400

**Appropriated Amount:** \$7,996,000

**Percentage:** 57.85%

Item	Total Requested		Total Appropriated		Percentage of Request	
	Requested	Leverage	Appropriated	Leverage	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	\$880,800	\$170,400	\$604,500	\$118,000	68.63%	69.25%
Contracts	\$1,790,600	-	\$1,167,500	-	65.2%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$4,400,000	\$50,000	\$2,557,500	\$50,000	58.13%	100.0%
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$2,400,000	\$600,000	\$1,093,000	\$275,000	45.54%	45.83%
Easement Acquisition	\$3,010,000	\$1,050,000	\$1,725,000	\$517,000	57.31%	49.24%
Easement Stewardship	\$336,000	-	\$216,000	-	64.29%	-
Travel	\$25,800	\$2,000	\$20,000	\$2,000	77.52%	100.0%
Professional Services	\$455,000	-	\$277,000	-	60.88%	-
Direct Support Services	\$243,100	\$292,600	\$158,000	\$219,500	64.99%	75.02%
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$40,500	-	\$25,000	-	61.73%	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$17,900	-	\$8,000	-	44.69%	-
Supplies/Materials	\$162,700	\$4,000	\$109,500	\$3,000	67.3%	75.0%
DNR IDP	\$60,000	-	\$35,000	-	58.33%	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$13,822,400</b>	<b>\$2,169,000</b>	<b>\$7,996,000</b>	<b>\$1,184,500</b>	<b>57.85%</b>	<b>54.61%</b>

### If the project received 70% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**

A reduction in funding would reduce outputs (acres/activities) proportionately.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**

Personnel and DSS expenses are scalable, but not proportionately, due to grant management, landowner outreach and other fixed costs. Some easement and fee acquisitions fail to close, but still have costs.

Landowner donation of easement value allows grant funds to go further, increasing personnel and DSS costs.

### **If the project received 50% of the requested funding**

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**

A reduction in funding would reduce outputs (acres/activities) proportionately.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**

Personnel and DSS expenses are scalable, but not proportionately, due to grant management, landowner outreach and other fixed costs. Some easement and fee acquisitions fail to close, but still have costs. Landowner donation of easement value allows grant funds to go further, increasing personnel and DSS costs.

## Output

### Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	88	53	60.23%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	460	270	58.7%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	800	352	44.0%
Protect in Easement	559	319	57.07%
Enhance	1,145	564	49.26%

### Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	\$479,700	\$312,300	65.1%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$4,908,600	\$2,850,000	58.06%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$2,410,500	\$1,100,000	45.63%
Protect in Easement	\$4,115,000	\$2,465,000	59.9%
Enhance	\$1,908,600	\$1,268,700	66.47%

### Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	88	53	60.23%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	460	270	58.7%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	800	352	44.0%
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Protect in Easement	\$4,115,000	\$2,465,000	59.9%
Enhance	\$1,908,600	\$1,268,700	66.47%



## **Metro Big Rivers Protection Program Decision Support Tool for Prioritizing Conservation Easement Opportunities**

The Minnesota Land Trust often employs 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 projects 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 includes easement sign-up criteria that lay out at a general level the framework utilized by the organization. Below is a more detailed description of the process the Land Trust uses to rank potential parcels relative to one another and identify those we will seek to protect with a conservation easement. We also include a ranking form illustrating the representative weighting applied to each criterion. 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.

#### ***Subfactors:***

- **Habitat Size or Quantity** – the area of the parcel to be protected (how big is it?), length of shoreline, etc. The bigger the better.
- **Habitat 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 other protected lands to form complexes or corridors, the better.

Note that we may emphasize one subfactor over another if the specific circumstances warrant it. For the Metro Big Rivers Program, landscape context is weighted more heavily than the other subfactors as this is a primary limiting factor related to biodiversity health relative in the program area.

#### ***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.

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.

**Conservation Easement Selection Worksheet – Scoring and Criteria**

- 1. Habitat Size or Quantity (25 points):** Parcels are scored based on acres of habitat to be protected through the a given conservation easement, relative to the largest parcels available for protection in the program area. In addition, very little information pertaining to the size of species populations on a given property typically exists, making any determination suspect. Habitat size is a valid indicator not only ecosystem health but has a direct correlation with species viability.

**Scoring:** Parcels are scored by how they fall relative to twelve size classes of habitat:

Points	Acres
0	1-9
5	10-14
10	15-39
15	40-49
17	50-59
20	60-79
22	80-99
25	100 or more

- 2. Habitat Condition or Quality (25 points):** Parcels are scored based on the quality or condition of occurrences of ecological communities (habitat), imperiled species if known, and climate resilience. As with Habitat Size above, population data for imperiled species is often minimal on private lands. As such, the condition of score is heavily influenced by the condition of natural communities on a property. However, we do allocate a modest level of points to the presence of imperiled species if they have been documented on a property. In addition, climate resilience information on a property can provide information whether the area is estimated to be resilient in the face of climate change. This is especially important for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, which due to development has a less resilient landscape than other areas of the state.

**Scoring:** Parcels are scored based on the condition of focal ecological community targets, presence of imperiled species on the property, and climate resilience:

- a) Habitat Quality (20 points)** – The Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) natural community element occurrence (EO) ranking framework and the [MBS Biodiversity Significance Ranks](#) are used to score habitat quality on parcels:

Points	Site Evaluation Score	Description
0	0	The only native community present on parcel has a D ranking; all of site is ranked “below threshold” for biodiversity significance
6	1-3	Less than 50% of the parcel is C-ranked native plant communities, and the rest is ranked lower than C
14	4-5	About half of the parcel is composed of C-ranked native plant communities, the rest is D-ranked or lower; part of the parcel is identified as Moderate Biodiversity Significance, the rest of the parcel is lower than “Moderate”
16	6-10	About half of the parcel is composed of C-ranked native plant communities, the rest is D-ranked or lower; all of the parcel is identified as Moderate Biodiversity Significance or higher
18	11-15	About half of the parcel consists of C-ranked communities and the rest is ranked higher than C; Part of parcel is identified as an MBS site of Outstanding Biodiversity Significance; parcel or part of parcel is identified as an MBS site of High Biodiversity Significance; the parcel includes one or more “lakes of biodiversity significance” as identified by MBS
20	16-20	More than half of the parcel consists of a natural community with an A, B, AB, or BC element occurrence ranking; all of the parcel is identified as MBS site of Outstanding Biodiversity Significance

**b) Imperiled Species (3 points)** – The [Natural Heritage Information System](#) data is used to identify rare plants, animals, native plant communities, and other rare features noted on the parcel. Scoring of the parcel is based on species abundance:

Points	Occurrences
0	0
1	1
2	2
3	3 or more

**c) Climate resilience (2 points)** – [The Nature Conservancy’s Resilient Sites for Terrestrial Conservation project](#) identified the areas estimated to be the most climate resilient for characteristic environments of North America. Parcel scoring is based on whether the parcel has above average climate resiliency scores:

Points	Climate Resilience
0	Entire parcel below average or average
1	Half of parcel above average
2	Entire par



- 3. Landscape Context (50 points):** Parcels are scored based current ecological context of the property and protected lands surrounding it; in addition, points are also allocated based on the likelihood that lands around a parcel will be protected going forward based on the identification of these adjacent lands in respective conservation lands.

**Scoring:** Parcels are scored as follows:

- a) Protected Lands Context (18 points)** – Calculated based on two subfactors, including size of contiguous protected land (if any) and amount of protected land within 3 miles of the property. Here, we look at three measurements:

- i) Acres of protected land contiguous with the parcel (8 points):

Points	Acres
0	0
3	1-9
5	10-39
6	40-79
8	80 or more

- ii) Acres of protected lands within a 3-mile radius of the parcel, whether contiguous or not (10 points). Blocks of habitat nearby but not contiguous can also play a very significant role in the maintenance of biodiversity over the long term. In this assessment, we weight protected lands within ½ mile of the parcel higher than those farther removed and score them separately.

- (a) Acres of protected land within ½ mile of protected property (6 points):

Points	Acres
0	0
1	1-9
2	10-39
3	40-79
4	80-99
5	100-119
6	119 or more

- (b) Acres of protected land from ½ mile to 3 miles of the parcel (4 points):

Points	Acres
0	0
1	1-99
2	100-299
3	300-499
4	500 or more

**b) Ecological Context (18 points)** – As with protected lands context, ecological context is calculated based on two subfactors: the amount of natural habitat contiguous to the parcel and the ratio of natural land cover to non-natural land cover within a three-mile radius of the parcel.

- i) Acres of natural habitat contiguous with the parcel, providing species with direct access to larger blocks of permanent habitat (8 points). Scoring of the parcel is based on the number of acres of natural land cover contiguous with the parcel:

Points	Acres
0	0
3	1-9
5	10-39
6	40-79
8	80 or more

- ii) Ratio of natural habitat to non-natural/developed land within a 3-mile radius of the parcel, whether contiguous or not (10 points). Blocks of habitat nearby, whether contiguous or not play a very significant role in the maintenance of biodiversity over the long term. In this assessment, we weight ecological habitat within ½ mile of the parcel higher than that farther removed and score them separately.

- (a) Percent of area covered by natural land cover within ½ mile of parcel (6 points):

Points	Natural Land Cover
0	0-19%
2	20-39%
4	40-59%
5	60-79%
6	80-100%

- (b) Percent of area covered by natural land cover from ½ mile to 3 miles of the parcel (4 points):

Points	Natural Land Cover
0	0-19%
1	20-39%
2	40-59%
3	60-79%
4	80-100%

**c) Future Potential (14 points)** – The degree to which the area within which a parcel lies has been identified as a priority for conservation action and the degree to which action is being implemented in that area is a direct indicator of the long-term potential for maintenance of biodiversity associated with a parcel. Lands affiliated with priority areas are more likely to be complemented with additional levels of nearby protected lands than those outside of priority areas. In areas experiencing high levels of development, this factor may carry a significant amount of weight in setting protection priorities. In the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, special attention is paid to habitat corridors as identified by state and local conservation partners.

**Scoring:** Parcels are scored based on three factors:

- i) Whether the parcel is located in a Minnesota Land Trust priority focal area (6 points). In the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, priority focal areas include lands surrounding large public land holdings such as Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge and Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area, and the Minnesota, Mississippi, St. Croix, and Rum Rivers and their tributaries.

Points	In MLT Priority Focal Area
0	No
6	Yes

- ii) The parcel’s position relative to priority areas identified in statewide planning efforts (4 points). Plans referenced include the [Minnesota’s Wildlife Action Plan](#), the [Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas Program Strategic Land Protection Opportunity Areas](#), [Audubon Important Bird Areas](#).

Points	In Statewide Priority Area
0	No
2	Yes

- iii) The parcel’s position relative to local priorities such as county, soil and water conservation district, watershed district, park district, and city and township conservation plans (4 points). In addition, an assessment is made about the degree to which action is being implemented within a priority area.

Points	Priority & Implementation Level
0	No/Low
2	Medium
4	High

**Minnesota Land Trust  
Metro Big Rivers Ranking Sheet**

		SITE 1	SITE 2	SITE 3	SITE 4	SITE 5	SITE 6
County							
<b>ECOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE</b>		0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SIZE/QUANTITY (25 PTS)</b>		Points					
Size: Acres of existing habitat to be protected by an easement	25	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>CONDITION/QUALITY (25 PTS)</b>		Points					
Habitat Quality: Quality of existing ecological systems (SNA Site Eval Score 1-20)	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Imperiled Species: Presence of documented rare features (count 1-3)	3						
Climate: Climate resilience score (above average = 2; half/half = 1)	2						
<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>LANDSCAPE CONTEXT (50 PTS)</b>		Points					
<b>Protected Lands Context (18 pts)</b>							
Acres contiguous protected land	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Acres protected land within 1/2 mile	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Acres protected land within 1/2-3 miles	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Ecological Context (18 pts)</b>							
Acres contiguous natural habitat	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Acres natural habitat within 1/2 mile	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Acres natural habitat within 1/2-3 miles	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Prioritization Context (14 pts)</b>							
MLT Priority Conservation Focal Area (y=6)	6						
Conservation plan context (y=4)	4						
County or local partner priority (no/low=0, medium=2, high=4)	4						
<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>COST</b>							
Bid amount (\$/per acre)							
Donative value (\$/acre)							
<b>TOTAL ACQUISITION COST:</b>		<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>