



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

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### ML 2022 Request for Funding

#### General Information

**Date:** 06/08/2021

**Proposal Title:** Big Woods Protection at Stieg Woods

**Funds Requested:** \$1,108,000

#### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Michael Bauer

**Title:** Recreation & Facilities Director

**Organization:** City of Rogers

**Address:** 22350 S Diamond Lake Rd

**City:** Rogers, MN 55374

**Email:** mbauer@rogersmn.gov

**Office Number:** 763-428-0974

**Mobile Number:** 763-286-4442

**Fax Number:** 763-428-0033

**Website:** www.rogersmn.gov

#### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Hennepin.

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

- Metro / Urban

**Activity types:**

- Protect in Fee
- Enhance
- Restore

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Forest
- Habitat
- Wetlands

## Narrative

### Abstract

The City of Rogers aims to purchase 20.8 acres of land that includes 19.9 acres (+0.9-acre buffer makes a regular parcel) of high quality, ecologically significant Big Woods Maple-Basswood forest in southern Rogers. The forest is a portion of a 59.71-acre Centennial Farm owned by Denny and Jan Stieg, whose family has resided on the property for more than 100 years. As development encroaches and the CSAH 117 extension is planned to bisect the property in the future, the family wishes to ensure that this patch of remnant Big Woods Maple-Basswood forest is preserved in perpetuity.

### Design and Scope of Work

While much of the surrounding Big Woods landscape in this area was converted to agriculture and is now subject to increasing urbanization and development, 19.9 acres of old-growth forest at Stieg Woods was left in an untouched state. The spread of Dutch Elm Disease prompted the Stiegs to work with a local forester to manage the stand's elms in the 1980s, but the forest, dominated by sugar maples, with pockets of bitternut hickory, basswood, ironwood, red and bur oaks, has otherwise been preserved. A 2006 tree survey measured 2,149 trees in the stand.

In the spring, the woods glows green with sunlight drifting through new leaves, and the forest floor is blanketed by spring ephemerals and fiddleheads interrupting the expanse of maple seedlings waiting for a gap in the overstory to open up. Wood nettle, wild ginger, ramps, large-flowered bellwort, rue anemone, trillium, bloodroot, wild geranium, and Virginia waterleaf are all present. In autumn, Stieg Woods glows gold. The stand remains high quality, with very little buckthorn and no garlic mustard, despite its presence on nearby properties. Preserving this patch of Big Woods through acquisition, managing invasive species, restoring a habitat connection to Rush Creek, and maintaining the land's integrity through careful stewardship is this request's objective.

Minnesota Land Trust, which works with the City of Rogers to care for similar habitat at nearby Henry's Woods, will help to manage the land after acquisition. Their members will make an annual assessment of the forest's condition and connect with City staff to coordinate a plan of action. Management will consist primarily of work by City staff, but may also include educational volunteer events like buckthorn busts and garlic mustard pulls.

The remaining land on the parcel (26.91 acres cultivated vegetation/12-acres of wetland- not part of this ask), will be purchased by the City for restoration, potential development, and the proposed CSAH-117 extension. Along with CSAH-117, Rush Creek Regional Trail (RCRT) will be constructed by Three Rivers Park District south of the road, near Stieg Woods, and a natural surface trail connection will be constructed from Stieg Woods to RCRT at that time. This program requests funds for wetland delineation on the strip of agricultural land (to be purchased by the City) between RCRT and Stieg Woods, and its subsequent restoration to suitable habitat type(s) in order enhance this valuable connection between Rush Creek's wetlands and Stieg Woods.

The City of Rogers intends that Stieg Woods be available for public exploration, educational events, field trips, and special hunting events. Buffalo/Hanover, ISD 728 (Rogers/Elk River), and Osseo/Maple Grove School Districts are all within range, and access to a Big Woods environment would allow them to explore topics related to Minnesota's natural heritage, ecology, plant ID, and history. Programming could include educational bow hunts catered toward youth and/or persons with special needs, maple syruping demonstrations, foraging for wild edibles, and self-guided explorations of historical and natural resource topics through interpretive signage.

## **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?**

The native plant community of the stand of Maple-Basswood forest at Stieg Woods is classified as MHs39c: Sugar Maple Forest- Big Woods. It has an S-rank of S2, which means it is “imperiled.” It has a G-ranking of G3, or Vulnerable, which means it is at moderate risk of extinction due to a restricted range, relatively few populations (often 80 or fewer), recent and widespread declines, or other factors.

According to the DNR, 121 Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) are known or predicted to occur within the Big Woods. These SGCN include 55 species that are federal or state endangered, threatened, or of special concern.

Rare vascular plant species have been observed within other Maple-Basswood forests in the vicinity of Stieg Woods. It is also notable that Henry’s Woods, which is less than 3 miles from Stieg Woods, is mapped as High Value on the MCBS, and contains a similar forest type to Stieg Woods.

Stieg Woods is located at the intersection of four Townships, with neighboring Dayton and Maple Grove Townships having between 11-50 SGCN records; the lack of recorded occurrences on the Stieg Woods property and in Rogers Township does not necessarily indicate that SGCN are not present.

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

Development around Stieg Woods is encroaching on all sides in the form of large tracts of new single-family homes both to the north and south of the property (the most recent of which were platted in 2017 and 2019). In addition, the Dayton Parkway Interchange is currently under construction and set to open in fall of 2021. This interchange is the only exit along I-94 for roughly 5 miles between Maple Grove Parkway and Highway 101, and is anticipated to be a significant catalyst for local development in Rogers, including around Stieg Woods. This, combined with the pending CSAH 117 extension running through the parcel, almost guarantees that if the City can’t purchase this land, it is primed to be sold to developers who do not have the same commitment to preservation and natural resource stewardship or maintenance resources as the City does.

## **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:**

Stieg Woods is a nearly 20-acre patch of high-quality forest in a matrix of agricultural fields and wetlands that is increasingly being overtaken by residential development. It is also part of a natural resource corridor that connects two highly significant tracts of protected habitat: Crow-Hassan Park Reserve to the west, and Elm Creek Park Reserve to the east. For animals migrating between these large blocks of habitat, this corridor is an essential thoroughfare, and Stieg Woods provides a stepping stone for forest-reliant fauna. This patch of Big Woods may not be large enough to support migrating individuals for a long period of time, but it can serve as a resting place, shelter, and food source; and its presence shortens the functional distance that animals, especially birds, have to travel between larger blocks of habitat.

Stieg Woods’ proximity to Rush Creek’s wetlands, and the proposed restoration of the strip of agricultural land that currently divides the woods and the creek, may be helpful for animals that rely on a mosaic of habitat types throughout their life cycle. According to the NRCS, “wild turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) rely on a mosaic of interspersed grassland and forest to meet both their daily requirements and their life-cycle requirements. The less distance a turkey must travel to use both these habitats the more likely it is to survive and thrive. It is common for turkeys to be found in or near the edges that separate these two habitat types.”

## Sources:

- Ricklefs, R.E. 2008. The economy of nature. Sixth edition. W. H. Freeman and Company, New York, New York, USA.
- Minnesota Forest Resources Council Report LT-1203f: Relationships between forest spatial patterns and plant and animal species in northern Minnesota. 2003.
- Conservation Corridor Planning at the Landscape Level—Managing for Wildlife Habitat. 1999. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

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

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation

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

- Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

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

Acquisition of Stieg Woods helps to fulfill the OHF's vision for the Metro Urbanizing Section as, “a network of natural lands providing wildlife habitat... and a forestland base that contributes to the habitat picture.” By protecting remnant Big Woods Maple-Basswood Forest along the future RCRT and within a key habitat corridor, the program supports “perpetually protected ...forests providing habitat benefits and access.” The program advances the Framework's activities/outcomes for the Metropolitan Urbanizing Area.

The first goal of the DNR's Strategic Conservation Agenda is natural resources conservation. Protection of Stieg Woods' high quality Big Woods remnant fulfills the following SCA strategies:

- Conserve natural areas. Retain natural areas and working lands containing important habitats, especially habitats in jeopardy... Connect fragments of high-quality habitat.
- Identify natural resources most in need of protection and management. Give priority to places facing the pressures of land use change, pollution, climate change, and invasive species.

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

#### **Metro / Urban**

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna with an emphasis on areas with high biological diversity

### **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:**

Stieg Woods' 20-acre remnant of old growth Big Woods Maple-Basswood forest is a rare surviving example of one of Minnesota's heritage habitats. Of its original 2 million acres, the DNR states that only 10-15% of the Big Woods subsection remains as either wetland or upland forest, meaning the percentage of actual Big Woods forest habitat is far less. Acquisition of Stieg Woods protects a stand of old-growth Big Woods forest, and provides a stepping stone of wooded habitat between the large, intact ecosystems at Elm Creek Park Reserve and Crow-Hassan Park Reserve. In an increasingly development-threatened area, protection of these precious habitat patches, however

fragmented, is essential to the survival prospects of the wildlife populations that depend on them. In addition to the larger ask for acquisition funds, a small portion of this request is devoted to removing any invasive species present (ensuring a pristine foundation for future management), and restoring the strip of agricultural land between Stieg Woods and Rush Creek (to be purchased by the City outside of this request) to a suitable native plant community so that it better functions to buffer the wetland, has enhanced habitat value, and aids migration of species through this natural resource corridor.

### **What other fund may contribute to this proposal?**

- N/A

### **Does this proposal include leveraged funding?**

Yes

### **Explain the leverage:**

The Stieg Family has agreed to donate two acres of the woods to support its preservation. The City will be contributing Staff time and costs related to the acquisition of the property, including costs for the survey, a check appraisal, and legal fees.

### **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.**

No previous funding has been sought for the acquisition of this site.

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

Minnesota Land Trust, which works on behalf of the City of Rogers to care for similar habitat at nearby Henry's Woods, will help to manage the land after acquisition. Their members will make an annual assessment of the forest's condition and connect with City of Rogers staff to coordinate a plan of action. Management will consist primarily of work by City of Rogers staff, but may also include coordinating educational volunteer events like buckthorn busts and garlic mustard pulls, as have been conducted at Henry's Woods.

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

**Bald Eagles** – There is an established and currently occupied bald eagle nest just 1,075' east of Stieg Woods, on the adjacent parcel. Eagles can live 15- 30 years old in the wild, and exhibit strong nest site fidelity, so this nest could be utilized for a decade or more. The fields, woods, and wetlands on the Stieg Woods property provide access to nesting materials, perching sites ideal for hunting, and habitat to sustain small mammals, one of the eagles' main food sources.

**Red Admiral and Painted Lady Butterflies** – Butterflies forage in areas as large several square miles, but require a diverse range of vegetation to support their life cycle. Red Admiral and Painted Lady butterflies require nettles, which can be found in abundance throughout Stieg Woods' 20-acre forest floor, as host plants for their caterpillar stage. The woods' proximity to open water and puddling areas for drinking and rock and log piles for cover makes an ideal habitat. While these butterflies are broadly distributed in Minnesota, loss of habitat, especially varied vegetation types in close range, such as we find at Stieg Woods, can have marked impacts on species survival.

## How will the program directly involve, engage, and benefit BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and diverse communities:

The land proposed for acquisition is adjacent to the proposed Rush Creek Regional Trail, and the City of Rogers will provide a natural surface trail connection from the Regional Trail to Stieg Woods upon RCRT's completion. Spanning from Mississippi River Gateway Park in Brooklyn Park, through Champlin, Dayton, Maple Grove, and eventually through Rogers to Crow-Hassan Park Reserve, Rush Creek Regional Trail will provide easy access to Stieg Woods for a large and diverse population of regional trail users. In 2015, Rush Creek Regional Trail attracted an estimated 284,400 visitors, and its expansion to Crow-Hassan Park Reserve will only grow this number. Three Rivers Park District, which manages Rush Creek Regional Trail, has a goal of attracting regional trail users which mirror the demographics of the region, which is estimated to be 40% people of color by 2040.

Stieg Woods provides a nice rest point or attraction along the trail between Elm Creek and Crow-Hassan Park Reserves, where visitors could explore and learn about Big Woods habitat. Interpretive signage will be made available along with natural surface trails. Topics covered will include the Stieg family's homesteading history, but could also include exploration of traditional Dakota practices on the land, like maple syruping, bow hunting, and foraging. The site's location in what was formerly Hassan Township (now Rogers), was named for the Dakota word for sugar maple tree, "chanhasen." The site is well-suited to programming that includes maple syruping demonstrations or foraging (for wood nettle, fiddleheads, mushrooms, or as part of invasive management as in the case of garlic mustard), which is a popular activity and desired food source for some immigrant populations. It should be noted that Three Rivers Park District prohibits foraging on their lands, so access to land where foraging is allowed, like at Stieg Woods, would benefit those groups looking for easily accessible, trail adjacent places to forage wild foods.

## 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)?**

Yes

**Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) 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

**Where does the activity take place?**

- County/Municipal

## Land Use

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

No

**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:**

Given the size of the property, the City of Rogers is proposing to use the woods for bow-hunting events (deer and turkey), such as for youth or those with disabilities.

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

No

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved as a result of the OHF acquisition?**

Yes

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

Once vehicular and bicycle access to the woods is available, the City intends to provide a limited amount of natural surface trails for pedestrian access.

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

The City will monitor and maintain the trails as part of their overall trail system.

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

Yes

## Other OHF Appropriation Awards

**Have you received OHF dollars in the past through LSOHC?**

No

## Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Prepare for acquisition (survey, check appraisal, purchase agreement)	December 31, 2021
Acquisition	July 31, 2022
Natural Resource Assessment	August 31, 2022
Fall restoration activities	November 15, 2022
Spring restoration activities	June 30, 2022



## Budget

### Totals

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	-	-	-	-
Contracts	\$28,000	-	-	\$28,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$1,080,000	\$90,000	Property Owner Donation	\$1,170,000
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	\$32,500	City of Rogers	\$32,500
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	\$3,000	City of Rogers	\$3,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,108,000</b>	<b>\$125,500</b>	-	<b>\$1,233,500</b>

**Amount of Request:** \$1,108,000

**Amount of Leverage:** \$125,500

**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 11.33%

**DSS + Personnel:** -

**As a % of the total request:** 0.0%

**Easement Stewardship:** -

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

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

The Stieg Family has agreed to donate two acres of woods to contribute to the preservation of the woods. The City of Rogers has committed to funding staff time and costs associated with surveys, check appraisals, legal fees, and the construction of signage.

#### Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable?

Yes

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

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

Given the quality of the site, the project could be scaled through the elimination of the restoration components of the project.

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

The budget does not include funding for personnel or DSS expenses.



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

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

Given the size of the preservation area, it is not recommended that the project be scaled by 50% as it would limit the amount of habitat that could be acquired.

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

The budget does not include funding for personnel or DSS expenses.

## Contracts

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

The contracts line includes costs associated with delineating the wetland, prairie/woodland restoration, and invasive species management, including a small amount of buckthorn along the perimeter of the woods.

## Fee Acquisition

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

There is one property to be acquired.

## 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	0	0	0	5	5
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-	-	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	21	0	21
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>26</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	\$28,000	\$28,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	\$1,080,000	-	\$1,080,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$1,080,000</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>\$1,108,000</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	5	0	0	0	0	5
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	21	0	0	0	0	21
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	\$28,000	-	-	-	-	\$28,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$1,080,000	-	-	-	-	\$1,080,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,108,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$1,108,000</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	\$5,600
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	\$51,428	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	\$5,600	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State	\$51,428	-	-	-	-

PILT Liability					
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

## Outcomes

### Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- A forest land base that contributes to the habitat picture ~ *Acquisition of the proposed stand of old growth, Big Woods maple-basswood forest will preserve 20-acres of habitat rather than risking it falling to development. Stieg woods falls within a priority natural resource corridor that connects Elm Creek Park Reserve to Crow-Hassan Park Reserve, and serves as a migratory stepping stone for species relying on forest habitat. With preservation of this stand, we expect to see continued use by species like the nearby nesting eagles, and a continued presence of spring ephemerals and other flora and fauna typical of the maple-basswood ecosystem.*

## Parcels

### Sign-up Criteria?

No

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

### Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Stieg Woods	Hennepin	12023236	50	\$1,080,000	No



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

**Parcel Map**  
**Big Woods Protection at Stieg Woods**  
 (Data Generated From Parcel List)





# Big Woods Protection at Stieg Woods

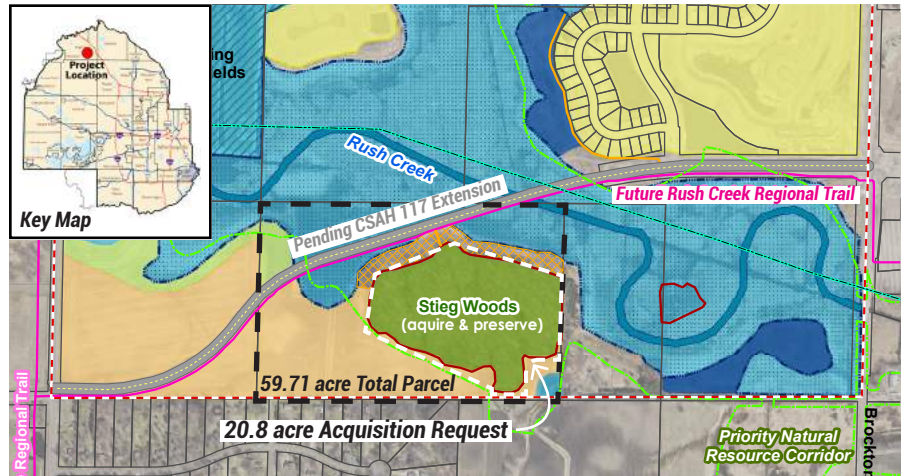
## Overview of Request

The City of Rogers aims to purchase 20.8 acres of land that includes 19.9 acres of high quality, ecologically significant Big Woods Maple-Basswood forest in southern Rogers\*. The forest is a portion of a 59.71 acre Centennial Farm owned by Denny and Jan Stieg. As development encroaches, the family and City wish to ensure that this stepping stone of remnant Big Woods Maple-Basswood forest is preserved in perpetuity.

## Stieg Woods Assessment

- » Dominated by sugar maples with pockets of bitternut hickory, basswood, ironwood, and elms
- » A 2006 survey identified 2,149 trees
- » Forest floor has spring ephemerals, fiddleheads, wood nettle, wild ginger, ramps, large-flowered bellwort, rue anemone, trillium, bloodroot, wild geranium, and Virginia waterleaf
- » Invasive species are limited with buckthorn on the perimeter and no garlic mustard present

\*The 19.9 acre wood is irregular, so the additional 0.9 acre purchase of surrounding agricultural land helps to form a regular parcel, and would be restored as habitat buffer.



Stieg Woods Plan Showing Future Development

## Proposed Access

- » City intends Stieg Woods to be available for public exploration, educational events, field trips and special hunting events
- » Programming could include educational bow hunts catered toward youth and/or persons with special needs, maple syruping demonstrations, and foraging for wild edibles
- » Natural surface trails will be created to allow visitor access to the site
- » Connection will be made to the proposed Rush Creek Regional Trail that will extend east-west along the south side of the CSAH 117 extension

### Legend

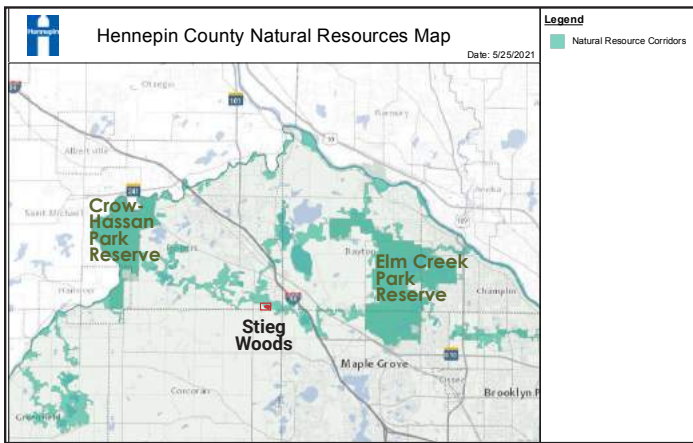
	Existing Stieg Woods (19.9 acres)
	5-acre Habitat Restoration with future connection to Stieg Woods from RCRT
	Ecologically Significant Areas
	Priority Natural Resource Corridor
	Wetland
	Future Wetland Restoration/Enhancement
	Future Wetland Restoration/Wetland Bank
	Existing Mitigation Wetland
	Possible Rush Creek Improvement Route
	Tall Grass Prairie Restoration
	Planned Walking Trail
	Possible Regional Trail Route
	Possible CSAH 117 Extension Route
	Possible Residential/Light Commercial Zoning
	Laurel Creek Residential Development
	Existing Electrical Transmission Line (345 kV)
	Hennepin County Parcels



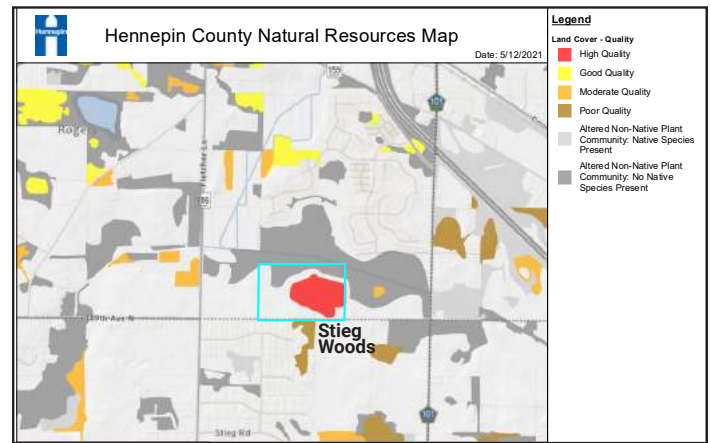
## Management

- » Remove buckthorn and any other invasives to provide a clean baseline for future management of the forest
- » Restore 5-acre strip of tilled land between Stieg Woods and Rush Creek to a suitable native plant community to buffer the wetland, enhance habitat value, and aid migration of species through this natural resource corridor
- » After initial restoration, Minnesota Land Trust will make an annual assessment and coordinate with City Staff on needed management

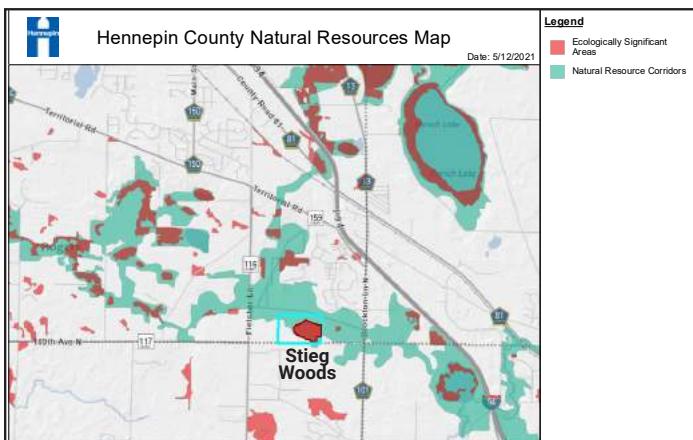




**Part of a Key Natural Resource Corridor**



**High Quality Land Cover**



**An Ecologically Significant Area**

## Importance

- » Part of a natural resource corridor connecting Crow-Hassan and Elm Creek Park Reserves
- » CSAH-117 is proposed to be extended through the larger Stieg parcel just to the northwest of the woods,
- » A new interchange on Interstate 94 will be completed in 2022 less than 0.75 miles from this property, bringing development pressure



**In the Path of Development Pressure**

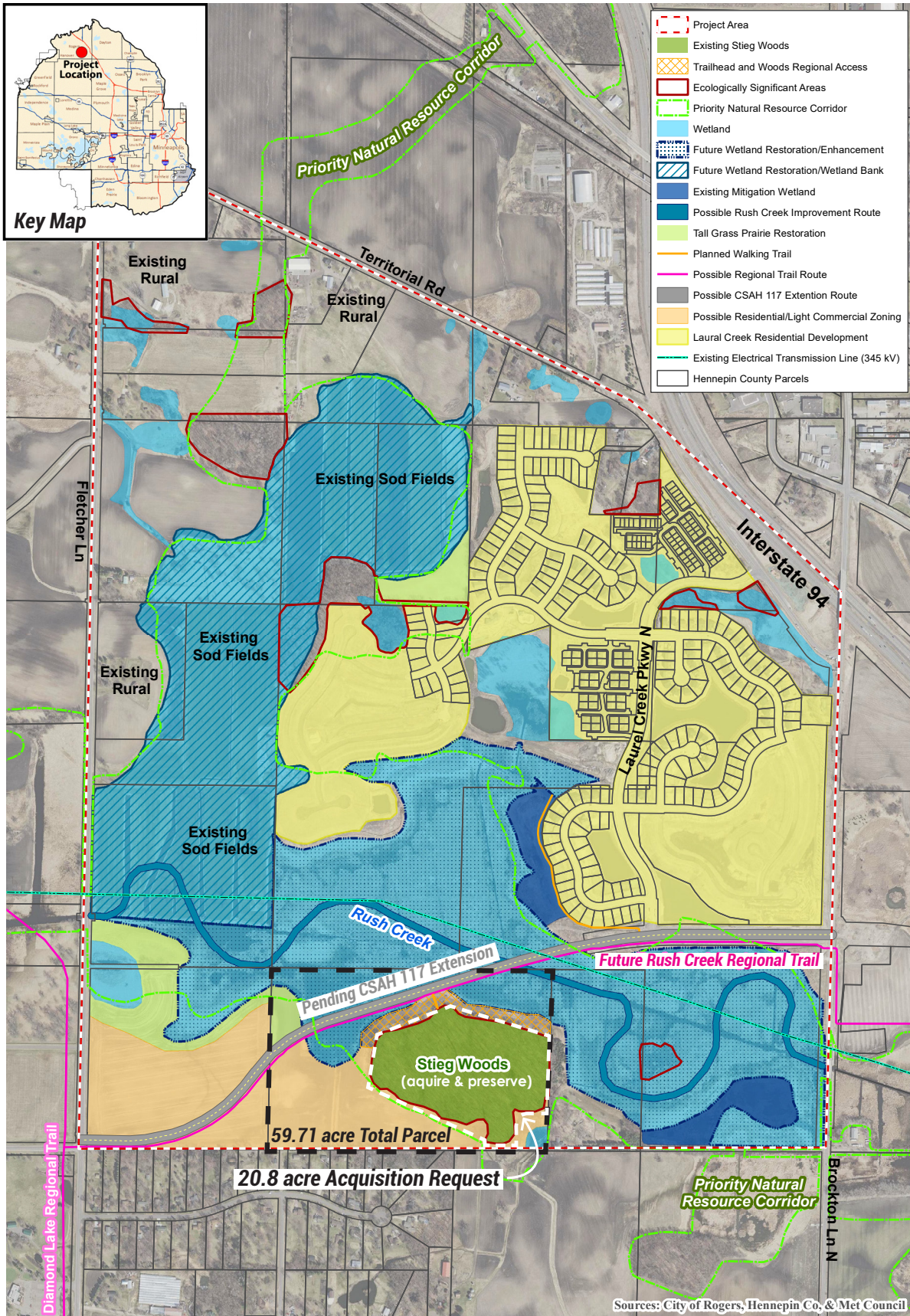


**New Interchange on Interstate 94 Will Prompt Additional Development**

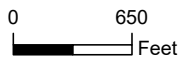
## Budget

- » Requesting \$1,108,000 for acquisition, initial invasive species removal, and restoration of a habitat connection between Rush Creek and Stieg Woods
- » The Stieg Family will donate 2 acres of forest for preservation
- » City will contribute staffing and costs associated with acquisition, such as survey, check appraisal and legal fees
- » Future investments by the City include additional restoration, natural surface trail construction, parking lot, programming, and ongoing monitoring and maintenance
- » City will also be purchasing 24.5 acres of the original parcel for the CSAH 117 road extension, Rush Creek Trail construction, and restoration of wetlands and upland, including the proposed 5 acre buffer to Stieg Woods





**Stieg Woods & Surrounding Natural Resources Plan**



**Stieg Woods Project  
Rogers, Minnesota**

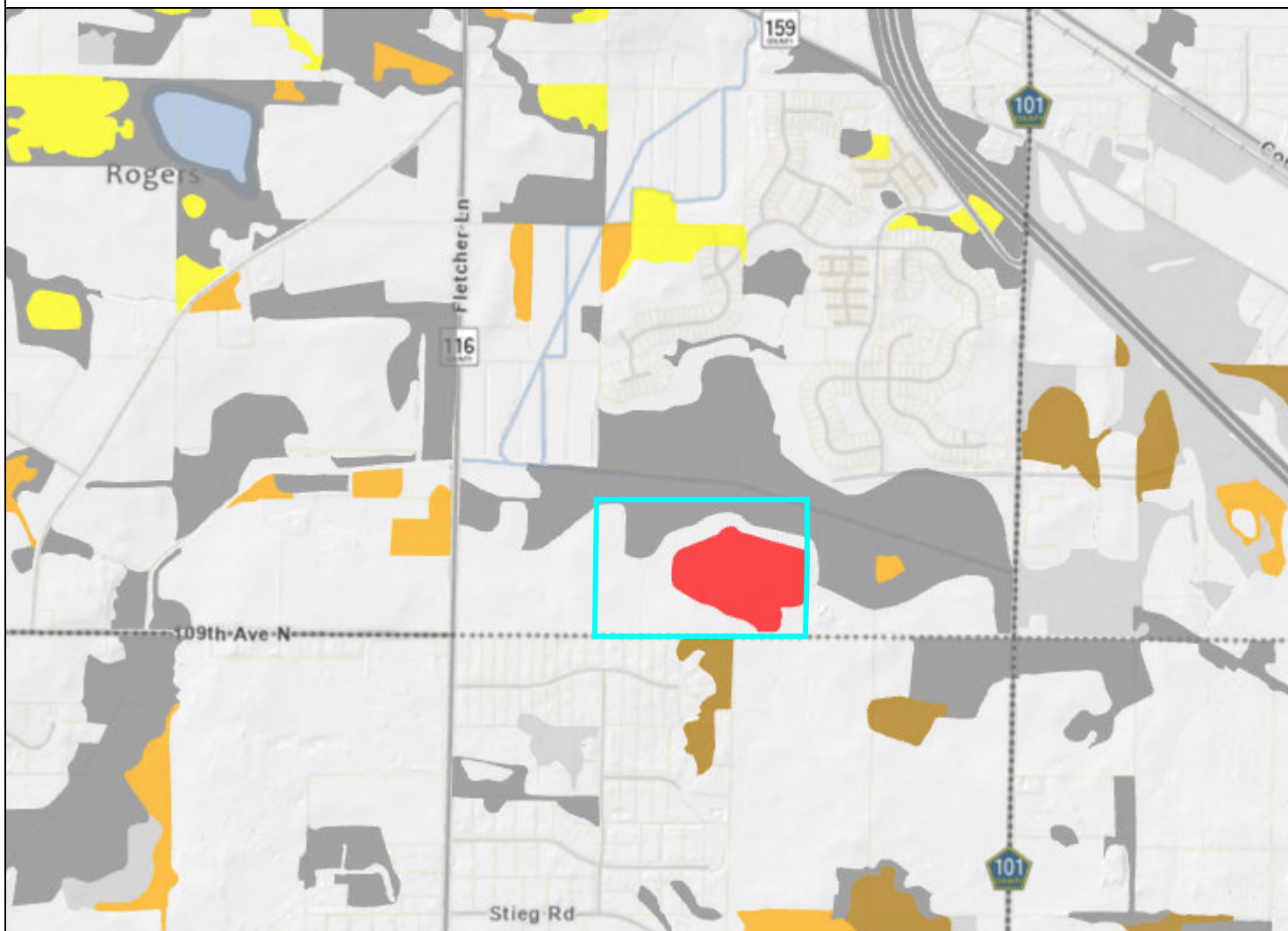
Note: Boundaries indicated on this figure are approximate and do not constitute an official survey product.





# Hennepin County Natural Resources Map

Date: 5/12/2021



## Legend

### Land Cover - Quality

- High Quality
- Good Quality
- Moderate Quality
- Poor Quality
- Altered Non-Native Plant Community: Native Species Present
- Altered Non-Native Plant Community: No Native Species Present

PID: 3612023340002  
Address: 92 ADDRESS UNASSIGNED,  
ROGERS  
Owner Name: D M STIEG &  
J M STIEG TRSTE  
Acres: 59.71

Comments:

1 inch = 1,600 feet



This data (i) is furnished 'AS IS' with no representation as to completeness or accuracy; (ii) is furnished with no warranty of any kind; and (iii) is not suitable for legal, engineering or surveying purposes. Hennepin County shall not be liable for any damage, injury or loss resulting from this data.

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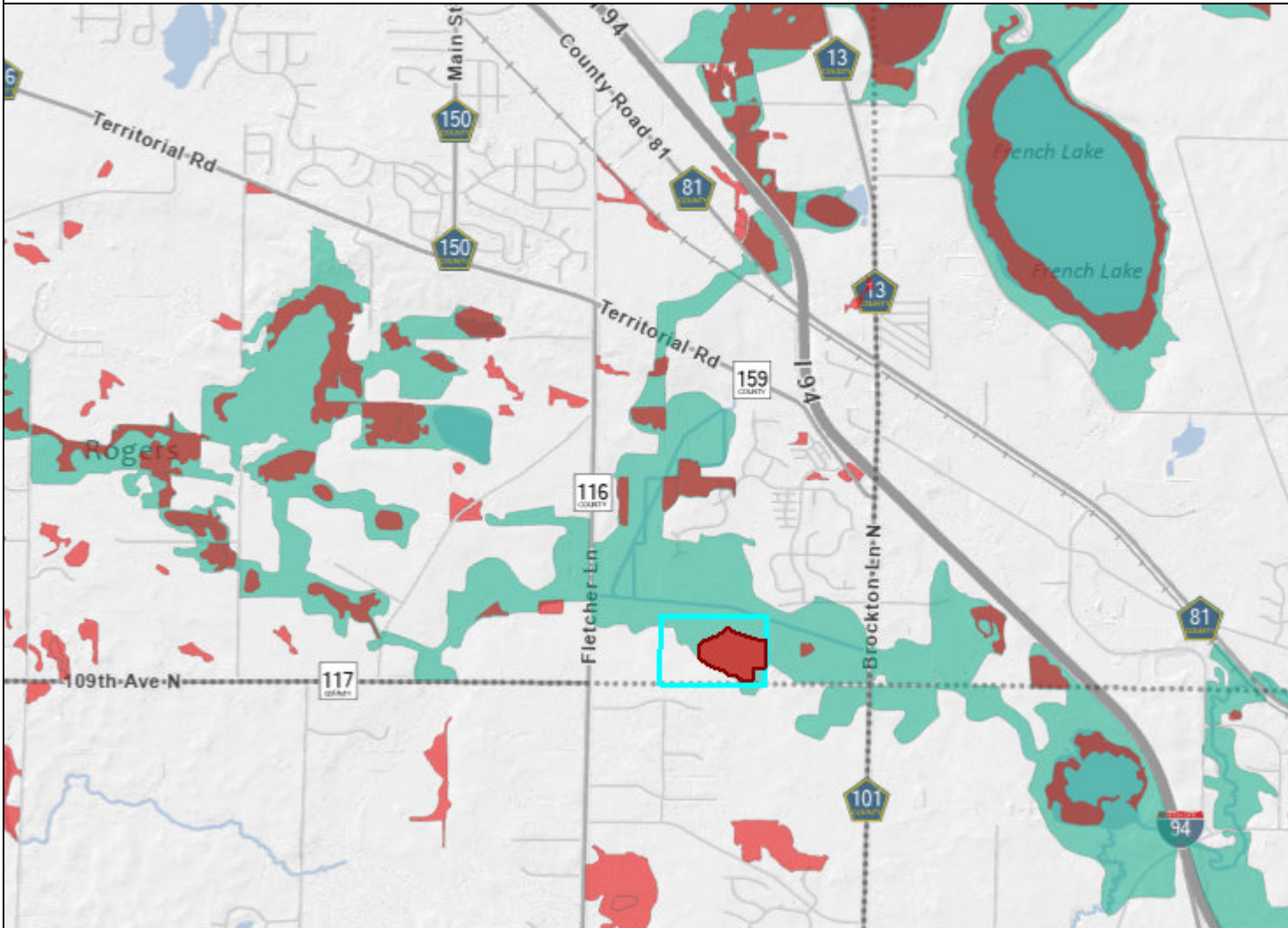


# Hennepin County Natural Resources Map

Date: 5/12/2021

## Legend

- Ecologically Significant Areas
- Natural Resource Corridors



PID: 3612023340002  
 Address: 92 ADDRESS UNASSIGNED,  
 ROGERS  
 Owner Name: D M STIEG &  
 J M STIEG TRSTE  
 Acres: 59.71

Comments:

1 inch = 3,200 feet



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# HENNEPIN COUNTY

## MINNESOTA

May 25, 2021

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
State Office Building, Room 95  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: City of Rogers Outdoor Heritage Fund Request

Dear LSOHC Members:

Hennepin County Environment and Energy enthusiastically supports the City of Rogers' funding proposal to acquire and protect this important remnant of high quality Big Woods in an area of our county where examples of and especially access to our natural heritage is becoming increasingly rare.

As emphasized in the proposal, the threat to this property is real and imminent, and the quality or these woods is certainly deserving of protection. If this property were to come to the Hennepin County Habitat Conservation Program (funded in two phases so far by this Council) as a potential conservation easement it is very likely that this property would rank competitively with other projects that we've pursued and completed.

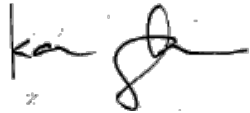
Hennepin County is excited about the larger opportunities for improving natural resources as this area develops to create a habitat complex that preserves a space for wildlife in this area and improves access to natural resources to nearby residents. The county would be excited to work with the City and the Stieg family to explore conservation development opportunities on the remaining farmland, and opportunities to improve and restore the large adjacent wetland complex. Protection of Stieg Woods through acquisition is a necessary first step in prompting a future for this area that incorporates and values natural resources. This project creates opportunities for a partnership between the city, the Stieg Family, and the county's Habitat Conservation Program. This project is well-aligned with the county's guidelines for acquisition of conservation easements, the Natural Resource Strategic Plan, as well as the county's Climate Action Plan.



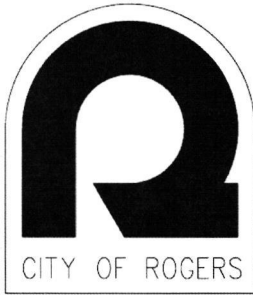
Last, but certainly not least, it is important to emphasize the expertise and capability of the team that the City of Rogers has brought together around these efforts. The City has developed and delivered a similar project (Henry's Woods) with a similar group of partners (including the county and the Minnesota Land Trust) in the past. The City of Rogers understands both the nuances and complexity of these types of natural resource-focused land deals, as well as the long-term commitment and maintenance necessary to ensure that the public investment is a good one.

Our department strongly supports this proposal for its ability to protect existing high quality habitat, connect residents to natural resources, as well as the opportunity it provides to think bigger about the role of natural resources in the development of this area. Thank you for your consideration, and please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions about how this project is complementary to other on-going habitat protection efforts in our county.

Sincerely,



Karen Galles  
Environment and Energy Department  
Hennepin County  
701 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. South, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
[Karen.Galles@hennepin.us](mailto:Karen.Galles@hennepin.us)  
612/235-0712



*City of Rogers  
Public Works Department  
22350 South Diamond Lake Road  
Rogers, Minnesota 55374  
Phone: 763.428.8580  
Fax: 763.428.9261  
www.ci.rogers.mn.us*

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May 25, 2021

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
State Office Building, Room 95  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: City of Rogers Outdoor Heritage Fund Request

Dear LSOHC Members:

I write today to support the proposal from the City of Rogers for funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund to acquire 20 acres of high quality, ecologically significant Big Woods Maple-Basswood Forest in the City of Rogers.

The City of Rogers has been working for several years to preserve Stieg Woods and the City is committed to preserving this valuable piece of natural resources. The City recognizes the uniqueness of the forest and knows that it is a valuable piece of a natural resource corridor that connects Crow-Hassan Park Reserve to the west and Elm Creek Park Reserve to the east. In addition, Stieg Woods will be located immediately adjacent to the proposed Rush Creek Regional Trail, which will provide access to these beautiful woods for generations to enjoy. The City of Rogers is also committed to acquiring and building an adjacent trail head to support the use of Stieg Woods and provide access to Rush Creek Regional Trail.

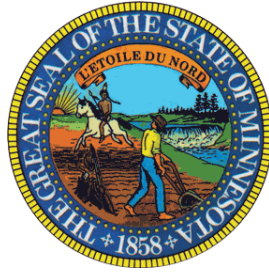
The City Council of the City of Rogers supports this project and believes acquisition of Stieg Woods is critical, as development is occurring on all sides and a dramatic increase in development pressure is anticipated with the completion of the Dayton Parkway Interchange on Interstate 94 in late 2021.

Sincerely,

Rick Ihli  
City of Rogers  
Mayor



**Kristin Robbins**  
**State Representative**



# Minnesota House of Representatives

**District 34A**

May 25, 2021

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
State Office Building, Room 95  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: City of Rogers Outdoor Heritage Fund Request

Dear LSOHC Members:

I am writing to express my strong support the proposal from the City of Rogers for funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund to acquire almost 20 acres of ecologically significant old-growth forest at Steig Woods in the City of Rogers.

Acquiring and preserving this 19.9 acres of Maple-Basswood forest would protect a rare surviving example of Minnesota's heritage Big Woods, preserve important habitat for wildlife and improve connectivity and access between the ecosystems of the Crow-Hassan Park Reserve and the Elm Creek Park Reserve.

This project addresses the LSOHC's priorities for protecting and enhancing Big Woods forests in the Metro Urbanizing Area. As new single-family housing continues to develop and the Dayton Parkway Interchange is completed in the Fall of 2021, the pressure to develop the Steig Woods continues to grow. With the pending extension of CSAH 117 through a section of the larger parcel, it is likely that this pristine area will be lost to developers if action is not taken quickly to protect it.

The City of Rogers would like to acquire this land to preserve it for future generations through careful stewardship and smart conservation practices. The Woods are dominated by sugar maples but also contain bitternut hickory, basswood, ironwood, and red and bur oaks. It is also home to a wide variety of flower and plant species and contains a thriving butterfly population, documented nearby Eagles nests, and is a thoroughway for wildlife.

The City of Rogers will collaborate with the Minnesota Land Trust, a proven and experienced organization, to maintain the land's natural beauty and ecosystem. Included in the City's plans are making the area accessible for all members of the public to explore, learn, volunteer, and participate in special events that highlight the land's Dakota heritage and traditions. The land is near multiple school districts and would serve as a space for school field trips that complement the lessons students are learning in the classroom.

I strongly support this project and believe the acquisition of Stieg Woods is critical to protecting a vulnerable habitat, threaten by development on all sides. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristin Robbins  
State Representative