



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

ML 2022 Request for Funding

General Information

Date: 06/07/2021

Proposal Title: 2022 Metro Big Rivers Phase 12

Funds Requested: \$13,822,400

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, Sibley, Carver, Chisago, Scott, Dakota, Ramsey, Hennepin and Sherburne.

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 1,260 acres in fee title and 559 acres in permanent conservation easement, restore 88 acres and enhance 1,145 acres of priority habitat in the big rivers corridors in the Metropolitan Urbanizing Area (3,052 acres total). Partners will leverage OHF grants at least 16% 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 636 acres at five 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
- Hastings Sand Coulee SNA: Enhance 190 acres prairie and 71 acres oak forest
- Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area: Enhance 165 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 70 acres forest.

Great River Greening (GRG) will restore/enhance 497 acres across 12 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 80 acres oak savanna/woodland and prairie
- Spring Lake Park (Dakota County): Enhance 200 acres 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
- Crystal Spring SNA: Enhance 40 acres forest
- Falls Creek SNA: Enhance 40 acres forest
- Wood-Rill SNA: Enhance 40 acres big woods
- Westwood Hills Nature Center: Enhance 15 acres of oak savanna
- Jim's Prairie: Enhance 11 acres of prairie
- Valley Park Phase II: Enhance 15 acres of oak woodland.

Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) will protect through perpetual conservation easement 559 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 100 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 800 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 460 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 proposal address habitats that have significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and/or threatened or endangered species, and list targeted species?

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

Friends of the Mississippi River 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.

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

The three major rivers, which converge in the Metro Urbanizing Area (MUA), are of significant importance to a myriad of migrating species and SGCN. Four intersecting issues create urgency for Metro Big Rivers Partnerships' work in the MUA -- 1) continued decline of many wildlife species, most notably birds and pollinators, 2) declining habitat these species need to rebound and thrive, 3) rising land values and development and 4) metro residents' need for nature nearby.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 proposal?

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

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

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

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

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

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal?

Metro / Urban

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

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

Metro Big Rivers focuses on habitat within the three big river corridors and their tributaries within the Metropolitan Urbanizing Area (MUA). We are building, expanding, connecting and restoring complexes and corridors of protected habitat that include wetlands, prairies, forests and aquatic habitat. Opportunities are prioritized for the potential to contribute to building a permanent conservation legacy that includes outcomes for wildlife and the public. They supplement and expand on other conservation activities the partners are conducting in the MUA.

MBR works in partnership with local, state and federal agency partners and with willing, conservation-minded landowners. High-quality lands are protected through fee title or easement acquisition. Lands that are already under public protection but in a degraded state are targeted for restoration and enhancement, as are lands

protected through MBR fee and easement acquisitions. Where possible, protected and restored lands are made available to the public for outdoor recreation, including hunting and fishing, thereby addressing the need to provide such opportunities close to home to a growing and diversifying urban population.

MBR Phase 12 includes a diversity of projects that will significantly expand and improve the conservation legacy in the MUA. MBR 12 projects will protect, restore and enhance prairie, oak savanna, forest, wetland, grassland and shoreline habitat, all within the MUA.

What other fund may contribute to this proposal?

- N/A

Does this proposal include leveraged funding?

Yes

Explain the leverage:

Metro Big Rivers 12 will leverage the OHF appropriation with an estimated \$2,169,000 in other funds (almost 16%). The partnership has secured commitments of supplemental funding from the partners, private sources, local government units, watershed districts / management organizations and park districts.

MLT encourages private landowners to fully or partially donate the appraised value of their conservation easement. This donated value is shown as leveraged funds in the proposal. MLT has a long track record gaining landowner participation in this fashion. To date across all MBR grants, 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 \$1,050,000.

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

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

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
Ongoing	FMR, GRG, MLT, Local Partners, Private Landowners	Monitoring and assessment of restoration and enhancement projects	Target actions, engage local partners and landowners	Take restorative action to correct any damage
Ongoing	MLT Stewardship & Enforcement Fund	Annual monitoring of completed easements	Enforcement actions as necessary	-
Post-Acquisition, Ongoing	MVT, TPL, Public Partners	Post acquired property	Develop & implement habitat restoration and enhancement plans	Transfer property to public partner, steward

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

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

Forests.

Indicator: White-tailed deer.

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

Grasslands/Prairie.

Indicator: Bobolink and Grasshopper Sparrow.

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

Wetlands.

Indicator: Mallards.

A Joint Venture biological model used to estimate habitat needs uses an accepted rate of 1 mallard pair per 2.47

acres of wetland habitat (noting that upland nesting habitat is also needed).

Trout Streams.

Indicator: Brook Trout.

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

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 proposal will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?

Yes

Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j)?**

No

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

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?

- SNA
- Permanently Protected Conservation Easements
- County/Municipal

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.

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

Will the eased land be open for public use?

No

Are there currently trails or roads on any of the 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 land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this proposal'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.

For the restoration / enhancement on eased lands, MLT restoration personnel will conduct outreach with easement landowners to evaluate, scope, design and schedule additional restoration projects. These activities will improve the project selection, cost-estimates and outcomes for future OHF funding requests.

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

Yes

Approp Year	Approp Amount Received	Amount Spent to Date	Leverage Reported in AP	Leverage Realized to Date	Acres Affected in AP	Acres Affected to Date	Complete/Final Report Approved?
2020	\$6,473,000	\$284,594	\$777,100	\$240,000	1,110	39	No
2019	\$4,163,000	\$615,602	\$664,100	\$5,900	831	179	No
2018	\$2,630,000	\$2,104,714	\$1,112,700	\$686,861	930	625	No
2016	\$4,000,000	\$3,576,843	\$693,100	\$1,828,477	1,057	1,142	No
2015	\$2,000,000	\$1,904,100	\$452,900	\$1,092,020	815	1,145	No
2014	\$2,650,000	\$1,210,600	\$357,000	\$1,343,100	619	309	Yes
2013	\$1,720,000	\$817,000	\$338,000	\$800,400	407	261	Yes
2012	\$3,680,000	\$1,345,800	\$726,000	\$27,500	753	569	Yes
2011	\$5,000,000	\$4,837,200	\$1,517,800	\$1,504,700	917	1,688	Yes
2010	\$2,397,000	\$2,395,400	\$2,066,000	\$2,876,400	407	807	Yes

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
FMR - Restore 4 acres and enhance 632 acres	June 2026
GRG - Restore 24 acres and enhance 473 acres	June 2026
MLT - Restore 60 acres and enhance 40 acres	June 2026
MLT - Protect 559 acres under conservation easement	June 2026
MVT - Protect 800 acres through fee title acquisition	June 2026
TPL - Protect 460 acres through fee title acquisition	June 2026

Budget

Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$880,800	\$170,400	-, Carver, Crystal, Mendota Heights, Scandia, St. Louis Park, West St. Paul, Friends of Scandia Parks, Dakota County, Scott County	\$1,051,200
Contracts	\$1,790,600	-	-	\$1,790,600
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$4,400,000	\$50,000	-, RIM, private	\$4,450,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$2,400,000	\$600,000	-, MN Valley Trust	\$3,000,000
Easement Acquisition	\$3,010,000	\$1,050,000	-, Private landowners	\$4,060,000
Easement Stewardship	\$336,000	-	-	\$336,000
Travel	\$25,800	\$2,000	-, Private	\$27,800
Professional Services	\$455,000	-	-	\$455,000
Direct Support Services	\$243,100	\$292,600	-, Private, Private	\$535,700
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$40,500	-	-	\$40,500
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$17,900	-	-	\$17,900
Supplies/Materials	\$162,700	\$4,000	cities, Crystal	\$166,700
DNR IDP	\$60,000	-	-	\$60,000
Grand Total	\$13,822,400	\$2,169,000	-	\$15,991,400

Partner: Great River Greening

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$218,700	\$137,400	Carver, Crystal, Mendota Heights, Scandia, St. Louis Park, West St. Paul, Friends of Scandia Parks, Dakota County, Scott County	\$356,100
Contracts	\$709,500	-	-	\$709,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$8,200	-	-	\$8,200
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$65,500	\$229,000	Private	\$294,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$10,900	-	-	\$10,900
Supplies/Materials	\$136,500	\$1,000	Crystal	\$137,500
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$1,149,300	\$367,400	-	\$1,516,700

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
GRG Staff (ecologists, technicians)	0.89	4.0	218700	\$137,400	St. Louis Park, Dakota County, Stillwater, Shakopee, Maplewood, Crystal, Scott County, Mendota Heights, Private	\$356,100

Partner: Trust for Public Land (TPL)

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$190,000	-	-	\$190,000
Contracts	\$75,000	-	-	\$75,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$4,400,000	\$50,000	RIM, private	\$4,450,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	\$2,000	Private	\$2,000
Professional Services	\$90,000	-	-	\$90,000
Direct Support Services	\$63,600	\$63,600	Private	\$127,200
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$30,000	-	-	\$30,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	\$60,000	-	-	\$60,000
Grand Total	\$4,908,600	\$115,600	-	\$5,024,200

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
TPL Staff (protection, legal)	0.37	3.0	190000	-	-	\$190,000

Partner: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust (MVT)

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	-	-	-	-
Contracts	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$2,400,000	\$600,000	MN Valley Trust	\$3,000,000
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$10,500	-	-	\$10,500
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$2,410,500	\$600,000	-	\$3,010,500

Partner: Minnesota Land Trust (MLT)**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$418,000	-	-	\$418,000
Contracts	\$329,000	-	-	\$329,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$3,010,000	\$1,050,000	Private landowners	\$4,060,000
Easement Stewardship	\$336,000	-	-	\$336,000
Travel	\$15,000	-	-	\$15,000
Professional Services	\$365,000	-	-	\$365,000
Direct Support Services	\$114,000	-	-	\$114,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$7,000	-	-	\$7,000
Supplies/Materials	\$5,000	-	-	\$5,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$4,599,000	\$1,050,000	-	\$5,649,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MLT Restoration Staff	0.5	4.0	190000	-	-	\$190,000
MLT Protection Staff	0.6	4.0	228000	-	-	\$228,000

Partner: Friends of Mississippi River (FMR)**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$54,100	\$33,000	-	\$87,100
Contracts	\$677,100	-	-	\$677,100
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$2,600	-	-	\$2,600
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	\$21,200	\$3,000	cities	\$24,200
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$755,000	\$36,000	-	\$791,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
FMR Staff (ecologists, conservation director, stewardship staff, bookkeeper, interns)	0.37	4.0	54100	\$33,000	cities, foundations	\$87,100

Amount of Request: \$13,822,400

Amount of Leverage: \$2,169,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 15.69%

DSS + Personnel: \$1,123,900

As a % of the total request: 8.13%

Easement Stewardship: \$336,000

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 11.16%

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

Leverage includes committed and anticipated funds from the Metro Big Rivers partners, numerous cities (Crystal, Maplewood, Mendota Heights, Shakopee, St. Louis Park and Stillwater), Dakota and Scott Counties, Minnesota RIM, private landowners and other private donors.

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?

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.

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. Our basis for billing is the individual projects 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?

FMR, GRG, MLT - Restoration / enhancement contracts with service providers.

MLT - Habitat management plan preparation, landowner outreach by county SWCD offices.

TPL - Potential site clean-up and initial restoration activities.

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?

Minnesota Land Trust's budget is based on the closing of 12-14 conservation easements. The average cost per easement to fund the Minnesota Land Trust's perpetual monitoring and enforcement obligations is \$24,000, although under 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?

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.

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.

FMR and MVT are not requesting DSS.

Other Equipment/Tools

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

Hand tools, saws, brush cutters, GPS devices, safety gear and other necessary equipment to complete 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	0	44	24	20	88
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	170	145	145	0	460
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	200	300	300	0	800
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	559	559
Enhance	0	420	685	40	1,145
Total	370	909	1,154	619	3,052

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

Type	Native Prairie (acres)
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Easement	0
Enhance	4
Total	4

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	\$226,200	\$156,700	\$96,800	\$479,700
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$1,814,000	\$1,547,300	\$1,547,300	-	\$4,908,600
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$610,500	\$900,000	\$900,000	-	\$2,410,500
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	\$4,115,000	\$4,115,000
Enhance	-	\$251,200	\$1,463,800	\$193,600	\$1,908,600
Total	\$2,424,500	\$2,924,700	\$4,067,800	\$4,405,400	\$13,822,400

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	88	0	0	0	0	88
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	460	0	0	0	0	460
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	800	0	0	0	0	800
Protect in Easement	559	0	0	0	0	559
Enhance	1,145	0	0	0	0	1,145
Total	3,052	0	0	0	0	3,052

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	\$479,700	-	-	-	-	\$479,700
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$4,908,600	-	-	-	-	\$4,908,600
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$2,410,500	-	-	-	-	\$2,410,500
Protect in Easement	\$4,115,000	-	-	-	-	\$4,115,000
Enhance	\$1,908,600	-	-	-	-	\$1,908,600
Total	\$13,822,400	-	-	-	-	\$13,822,400

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	\$5,140	\$6,529	\$4,840

Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$10,670	\$10,671	\$10,671	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$3,052	\$3,000	\$3,000	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	\$7,361
Enhance	-	\$598	\$2,136	\$4,840

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	\$5,451	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$10,670	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$3,013	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$7,361	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$1,666	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

7.25

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

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	\$86,573	Yes
FMR - Hastings Sand Coulee SNA	Dakota	11417202	261	\$229,790	Yes
FMR - Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area	Dakota	02722227	184	\$220,046	Yes
GRG- Valley Park Phase II	Dakota	02823223	15	\$70,800	Yes
GRG - Spring Lake Park Reserve (Dakota County)	Dakota	11518222	200	\$82,800	Yes
GRG - Lebanon Hills Regional - Phase IV	Dakota	02723235	80	\$398,500	Yes
GRG- Westwood Hills Nature Center	Hennepin	11721206	15	\$68,300	Yes
GRG - Bassett Creek Park	Hennepin	11821221	22	\$131,900	Yes
GRG- Wood-Rill SNA	Hennepin	11823236	40	\$33,700	Yes
GRG- Jim's Prairie	Ramsey	02922224	11	\$24,900	Yes
GRG- Huber Park	Scott	11522206	9	\$54,700	Yes
GRG- Spring Lake Regional Park (Scott County)	Scott	11422204	10	\$57,100	Yes
FMR - William H. Houlton Conservation Area	Sherburne	03326233	70	\$155,810	Yes
FMR - Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park	Washington	02721233	104	\$67,153	Yes
MLT - Ward Springs	Washington	03120201	18	\$80,000	Yes
MLT - Keystone Woods H	Washington	03121213	35	\$70,000	Yes

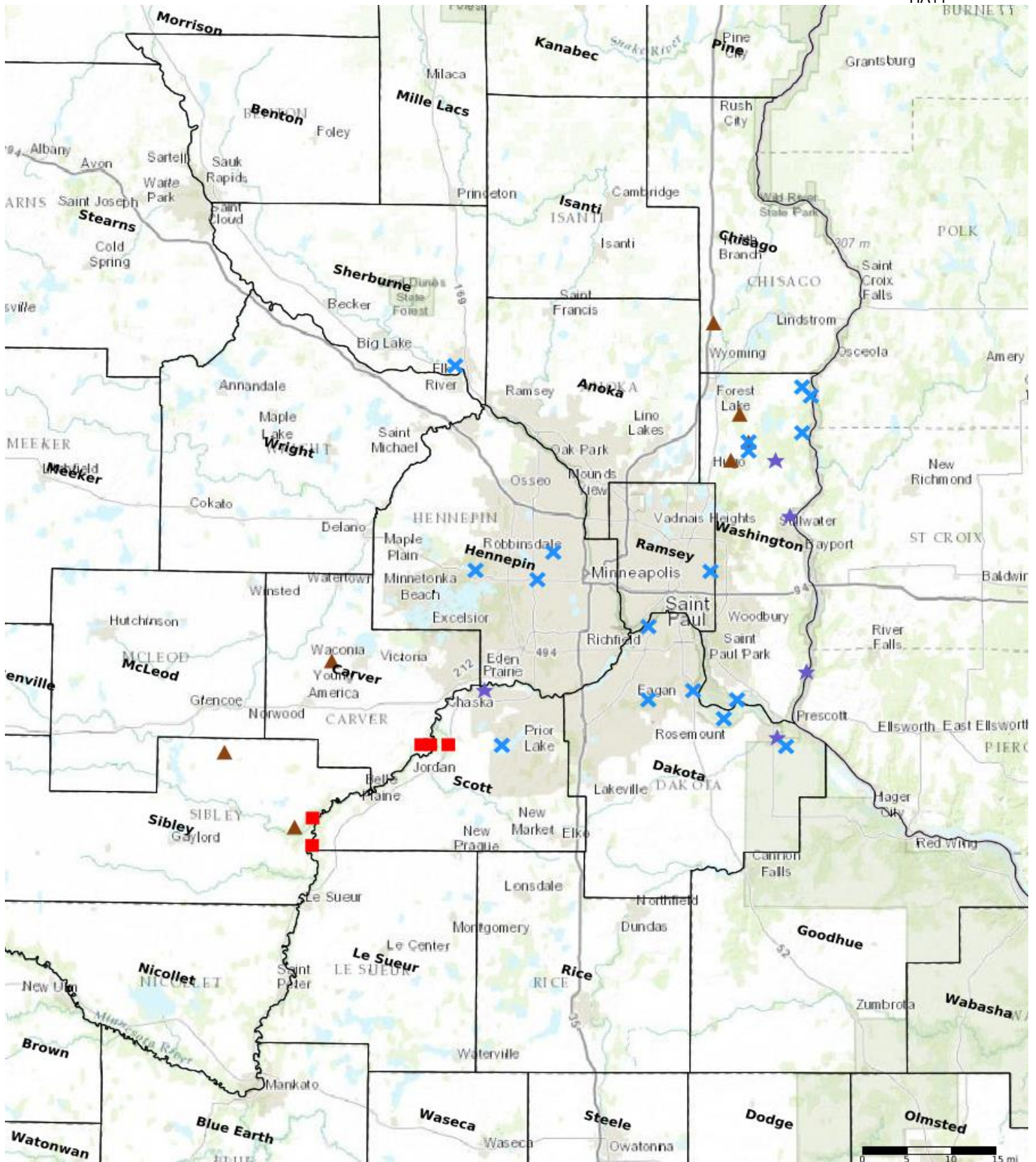
MLT - Carnelian Creek M	Washington	03120221	20	\$40,000	Yes
MLT - Keystone Woods T	Washington	03121212	40	\$80,000	Yes
MLT - Saint Croix River S	Washington	02720214	40	\$80,000	Yes
GRG- Falls Creek SNA	Washington	03220212	40	\$92,100	Yes
GRG- Crystal Spring SNA	Washington	03219218	40	\$32,500	Yes
GRG- Lumber Jack Landing	Washington	03020221	15	\$102,000	Yes

Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
MVT - San Francisco Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Carver	11424201	168	\$546,000	No
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
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 - Severance Lake WMA Addition	Sibley	11427208	102	\$525,000	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 - Hardwood Creek WMA Addition	Washington	03221226	470	\$700,000	No
TPL - Paul Hugo Farms WMA Addition	Washington	03121222	230	\$1,000,000	No
TPL - Keystone Woods	Washington	03121212	500	\$5,000,000	No

Protect Parcels with Buildings

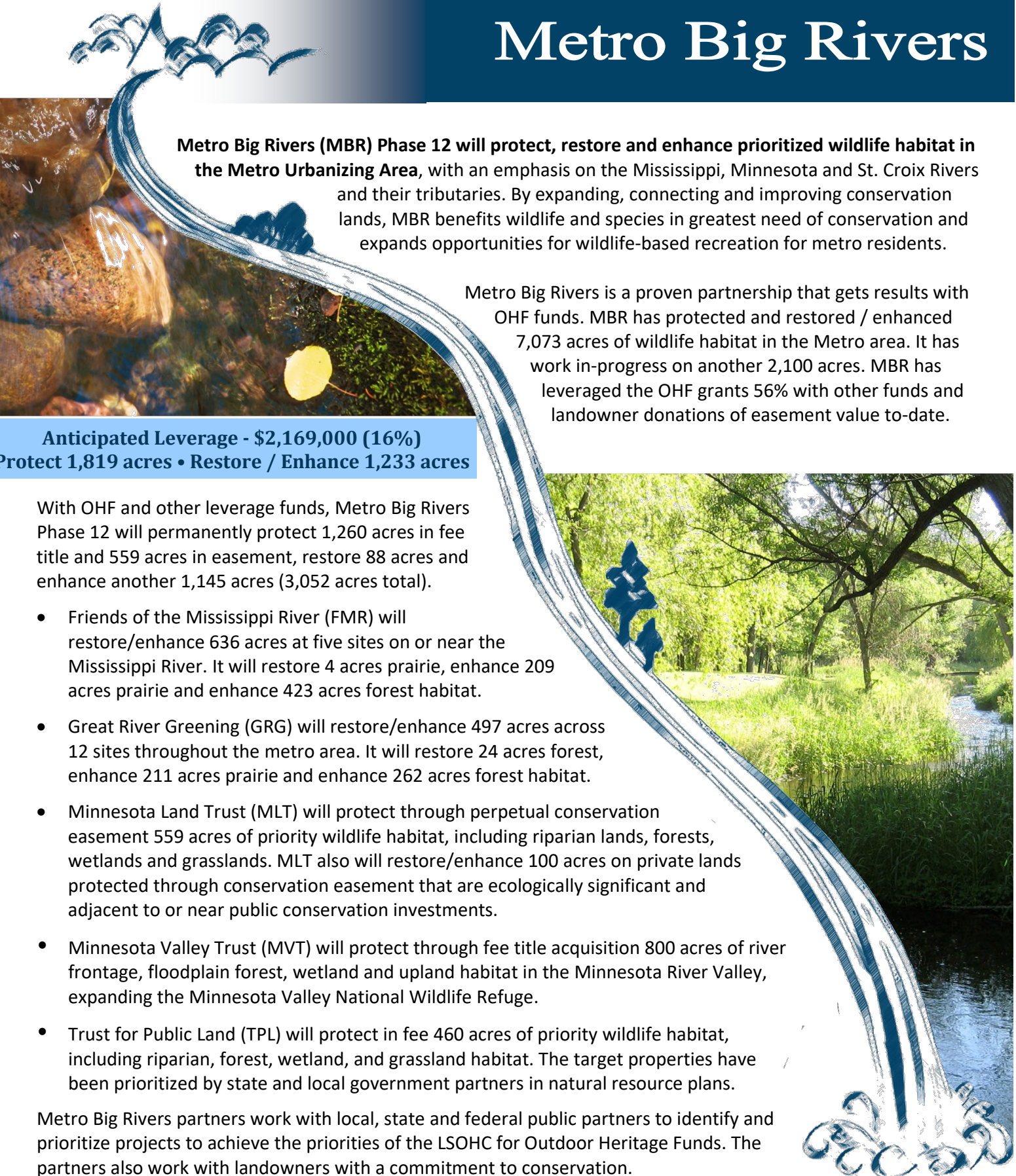
Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Buildings	Value of Buildings
MVT - Louisville Swamp Unit Addition, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Scott	11423204	7	\$650,000	No	3	\$160,000



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

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

Metro Big Rivers



Metro Big Rivers (MBR) Phase 12 will protect, restore and enhance prioritized wildlife habitat in the Metro Urbanizing Area, with an emphasis on the Mississippi, Minnesota and St. Croix Rivers and their tributaries. By expanding, connecting and improving conservation lands, MBR benefits wildlife and species in greatest need of conservation and expands opportunities for wildlife-based recreation for metro residents.

Metro Big Rivers is a proven partnership that gets results with OHF funds. MBR has protected and restored / enhanced 7,073 acres of wildlife habitat in the Metro area. It has work in-progress on another 2,100 acres. MBR has leveraged the OHF grants 56% with other funds and landowner donations of easement value to-date.

Anticipated Leverage - \$2,169,000 (16%)
Protect 1,819 acres • Restore / Enhance 1,233 acres

With OHF and other leverage funds, Metro Big Rivers Phase 12 will permanently protect 1,260 acres in fee title and 559 acres in easement, restore 88 acres and enhance another 1,145 acres (3,052 acres total).

- Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) will restore/enhance 636 acres at five sites on or near the Mississippi River. It will restore 4 acres prairie, enhance 209 acres prairie and enhance 423 acres forest habitat.
- Great River Greening (GRG) will restore/enhance 497 acres across 12 sites throughout the metro area. It will restore 24 acres forest, enhance 211 acres prairie and enhance 262 acres forest habitat.
- Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) will protect through perpetual conservation easement 559 acres of priority wildlife habitat, including riparian lands, forests, wetlands and grasslands. MLT also will restore/enhance 100 acres on private lands protected through conservation easement that are ecologically significant and adjacent to or near public conservation investments.
- Minnesota Valley Trust (MVT) will protect through fee title acquisition 800 acres of river frontage, floodplain forest, wetland and upland habitat in the Minnesota River Valley, expanding the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.
- Trust for Public Land (TPL) will protect in fee 460 acres of priority wildlife habitat, including riparian, forest, wetland, and grassland habitat. The target properties have been prioritized by state and local government partners in natural resource plans.

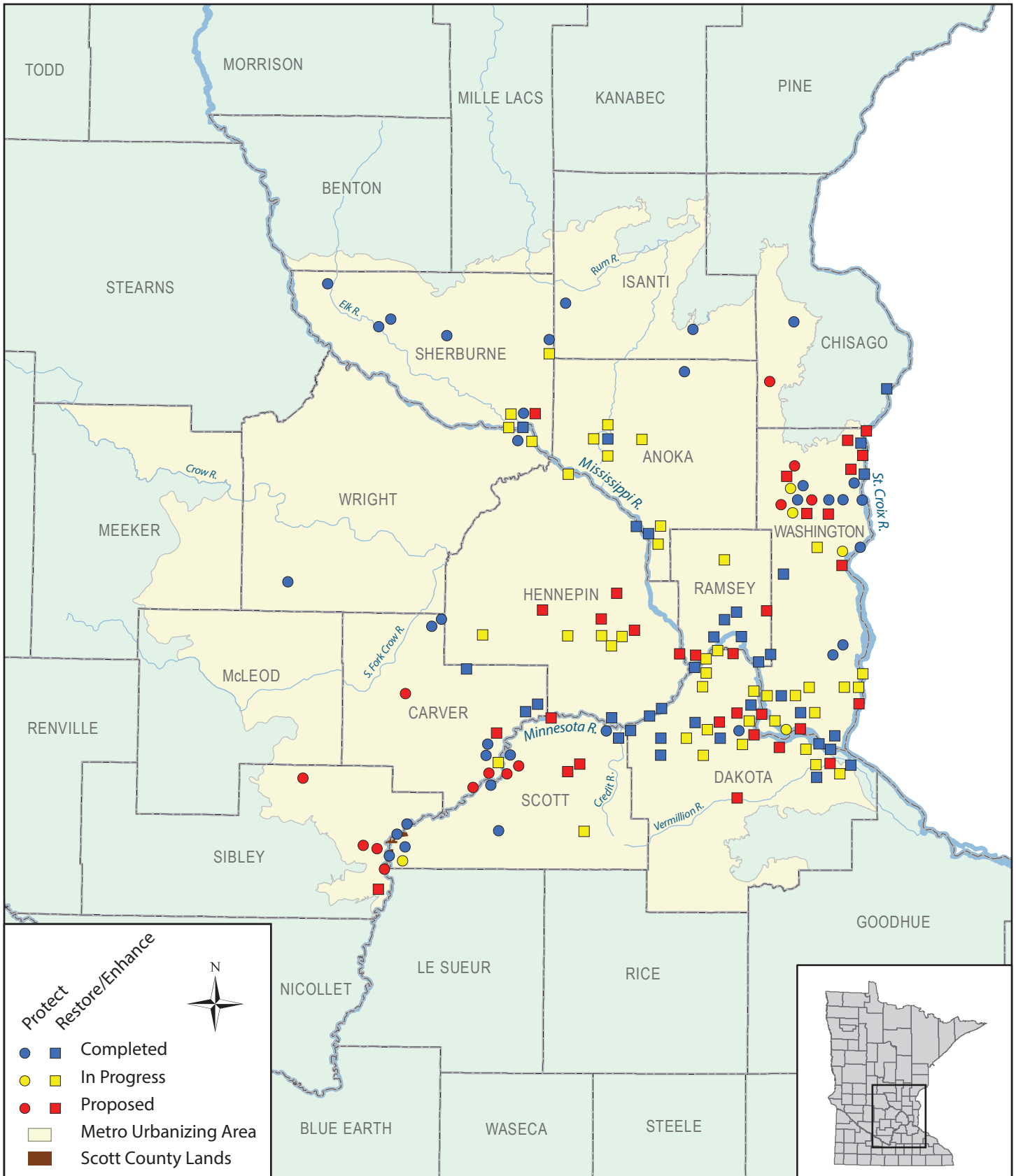
Metro Big Rivers partners work with local, state and federal public partners to identify and prioritize projects to achieve the priorities of the LSOHC for Outdoor Heritage Funds. The partners also work with landowners with a commitment to conservation.



For more information:
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Metro Big Rivers Habitat Partnership

Phase 12



Metro Big Rivers

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

The Metro Big Rivers program is unique due to its proximity to the Twin Cities. Despite the impacts of development in the metropolitan urbanizing area, high-quality riparian, forest, wetland and grassland habitat remain. By protecting these threatened lands, we are able to create close-to-home opportunities for millions of Minnesotans to experience a variety of wildlife-based recreation opportunities. To date, The Trust for Public Land has protected 1,741 acres through nine acquisitions with support from the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

How we work

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



Examples of our work

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



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

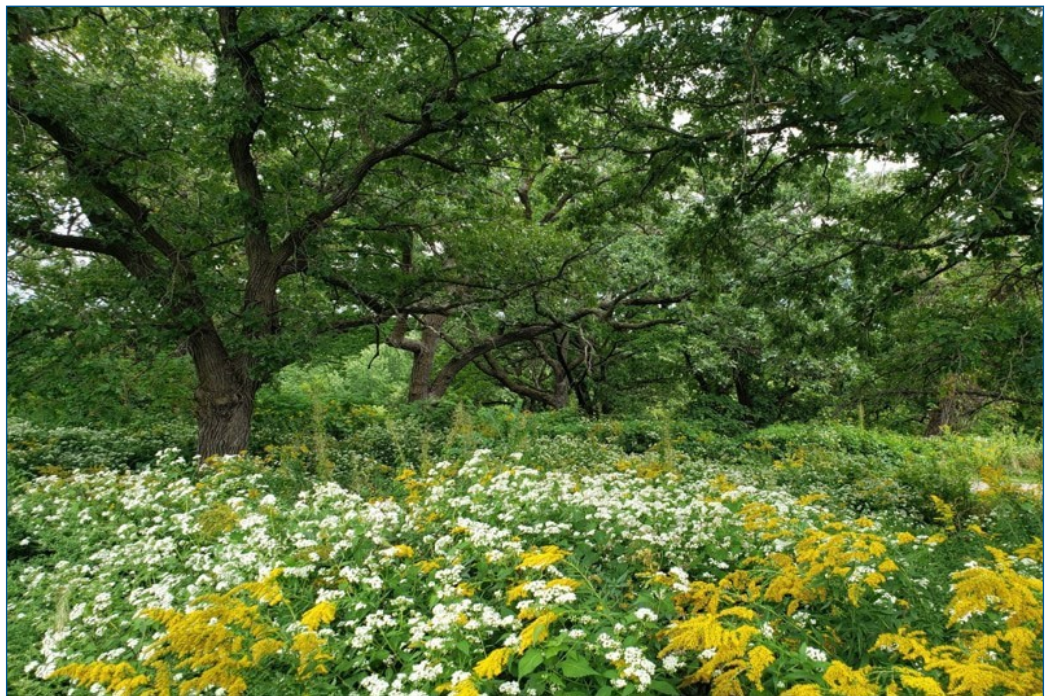
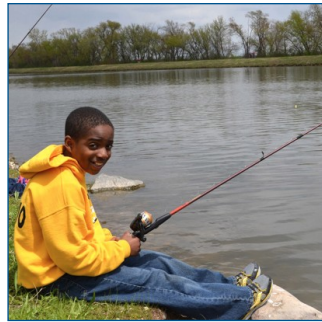
tpl.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

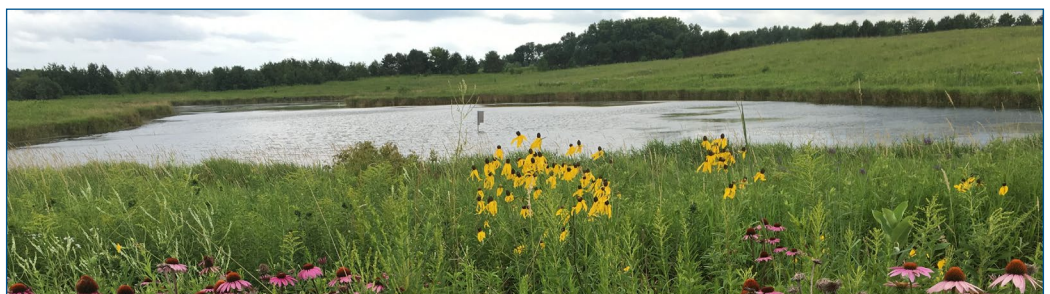
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PHOTOS: Andy Richter
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Supplemental Information
Minnesota Valley National
Wildlife Refuge Trust
MBR 12 / ML 2022



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

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

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

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

Land acquisition and restoration / enhancement is pursued primarily for the following Refuge expansion units within the Minnesota River corridor, stretching from suburban to rural - Blakeley Unit (Scott County), Jessenland Unit (Sibley County), Rapids Lake Unit (Carver County), St. Lawrence Unit (Scott County) and San Francisco Unit (Carver County). The Trust also pursues acquisition of in-holdings to complete other units of the Refuge from Bloomington to Chaska.

In Metro Big Rivers phases 1 through 8, the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) helped the Trust acquire 711 acres for the Refuge. OHF grants of \$3.1 million were leveraged 87% by \$2.7 million in other, private funds to complete five priority acquisitions. The balance of Phase 7 funds are being used for habitat restoration on the parcel acquired for the Rapids Lake Unit. Work is underway on phases 9 and 10.

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

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



Stretching nearly 70 miles along the Minnesota River from Fort Snelling to Henderson, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge is a unique resource accessible to more than 3 million residents of the expanding Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

The Refuge covers more than 14,000 acres of land and water, providing valuable habitat for a diversity of waterfowl and other migratory birds, fish and resident wildlife.



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

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

The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge also manages a 14-county Wetland Management District with more than 8,000 acres of land dedicated to wildlife and wildlife-dependent recreation. The District includes more than 25 Waterfowl Production Areas and 50 easements on private lands. Each of these areas is critically important to migrating, breeding and nesting waterfowl. They also provide habitat for grassland birds, such as meadowlark and bobolink, and a variety of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and other creatures.

Printable maps that detail access points, parking lots and trails on each of the Refuge Units and Waterfowl Production Areas are available on the Refuge website - www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota_valley/.

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

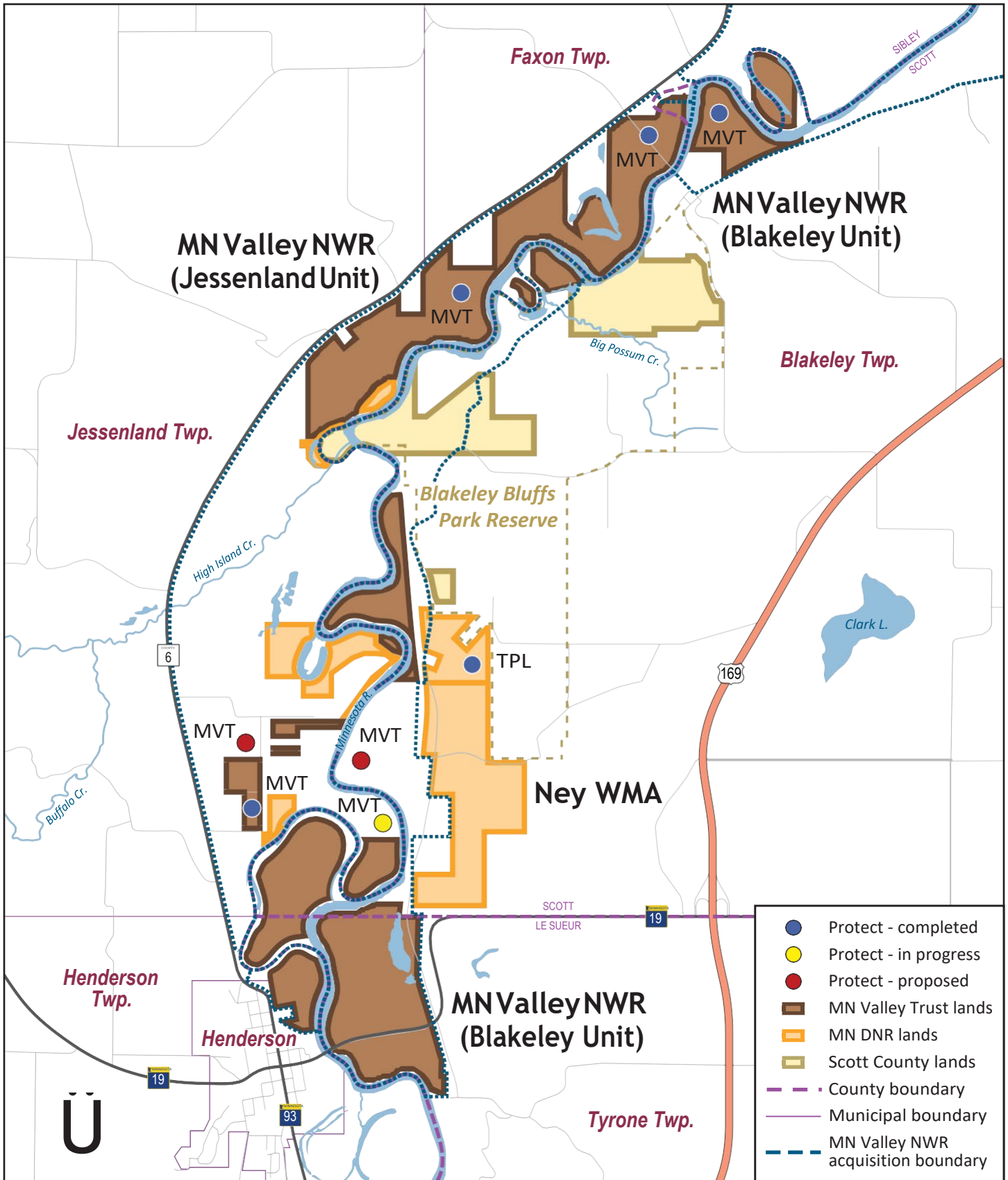
Two Refuge Education and Visitor Centers are open to the public and used by school and other groups for educational purposes. They are located in east Bloomington near the airport and Fort Snelling (3815 East American Boulevard) and near Carver (15865 Rapids Lake Road).

In addition to habitat acquisition and restoration, the Trust and Refuge are working to ensure the Refuge a welcoming place for the diversity of metro residents. For example, they are broadening community outreach activities and building a more robust internship and apprenticeship program to mentor the next generation of conservation professionals.

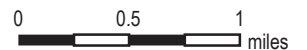
Refuge unit maps showing Trust acquisition activity and unit boundaries are on the following pages.

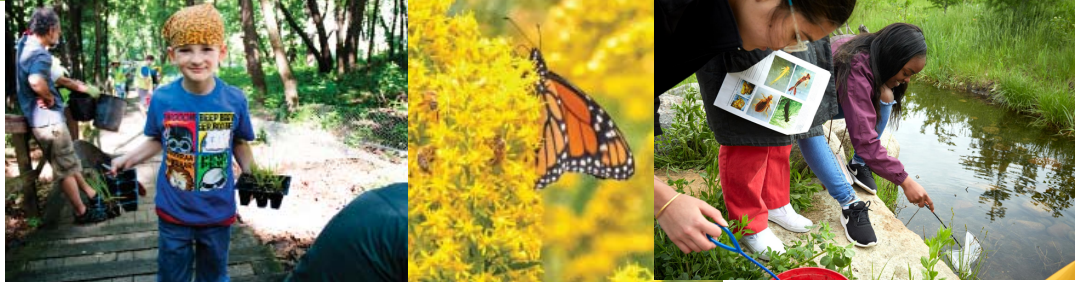
Metro Big Rivers Habitat Partnership

Phase 12



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





Springbrook Nature Center Oak Savanna/Woodland Enhancement (ML2013)

Supplemental Information Great River Greening MBR 12 / ML 2022



RESTORING LAND, WATER, AND WONDER



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

We focus on locations and activities that offer conservation impact, ecosystem services, and community benefits. While we started in Saint Paul, we now have projects throughout Minnesota. We choose our projects based upon conservation need, feasibility, and community benefits. Current priorities include critical lands and waters in the Metro Area, endangered habitat in the Anoka Sand Plain region of east-central Minnesota, conserving water quality in our state-designated wild and scenic rivers, and collaborating with farmers in agricultural watersheds.

Great River Greening’s enhancement and restoration projects in this proposal will be on various types of publicly-protected lands (city, county, state). The project sites are all areas of significant natural resource value for wildlife habitat. They are part of habitat corridors that provide important habitat connections through the urban core for various game species and migratory species as they move across the landscape.

These sites also all provide important opportunities for the public to recreate and connect with nature near where they live and work. Many of our projects will engage area residents through volunteer hands-on work caring for and learning about native plant and animal species.



**25 years of
Community
based
Restoration and
Enhancement.**

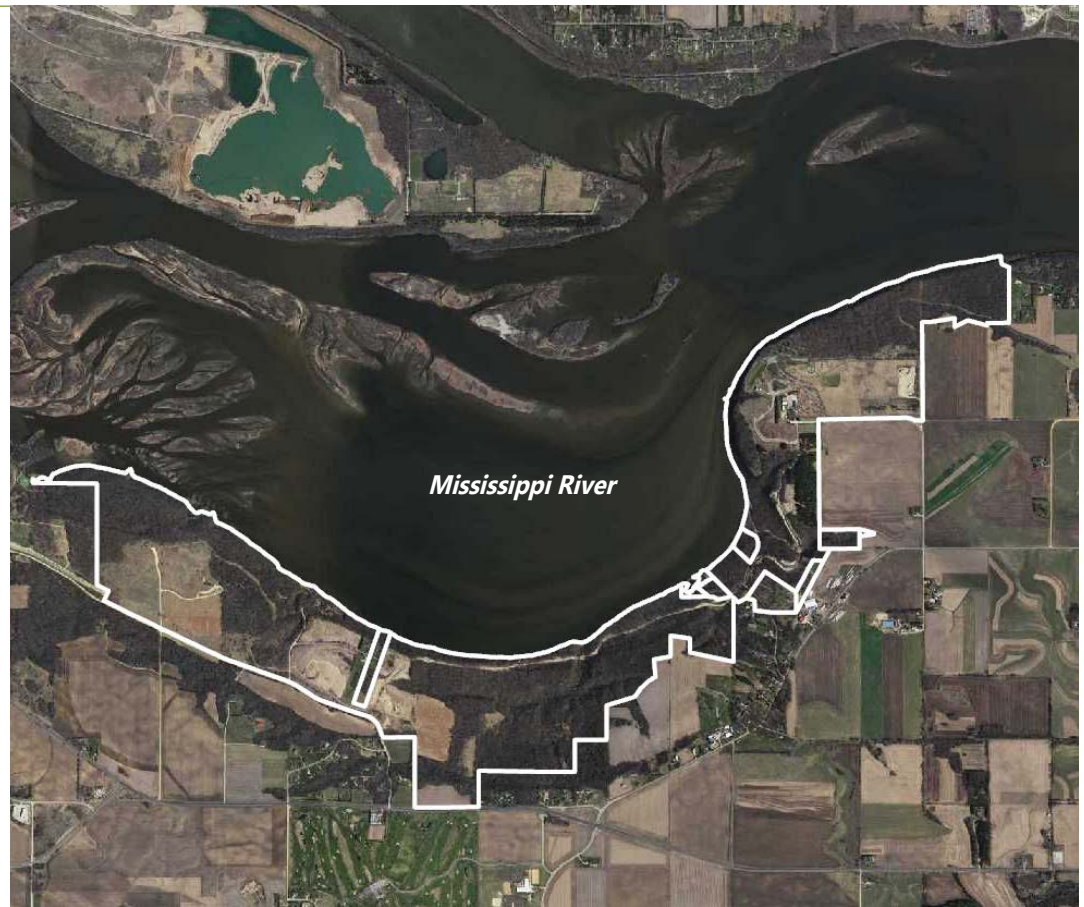
**Through the
Outdoor
Heritage Fund,
as a member of
Metro Big Rivers
Partnership,
Great River
Greening
has restored
& enhanced
900 acres and
is actively
enhancing
another 1500
acres.**

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

**Engaged
with 46,000
volunteers to
protect, restore
and care for
Minnesota’s
Natural Heritage.**

RESTORING LAND, WATER, AND WONDER

Spring Lake Park Reserve Dakota County

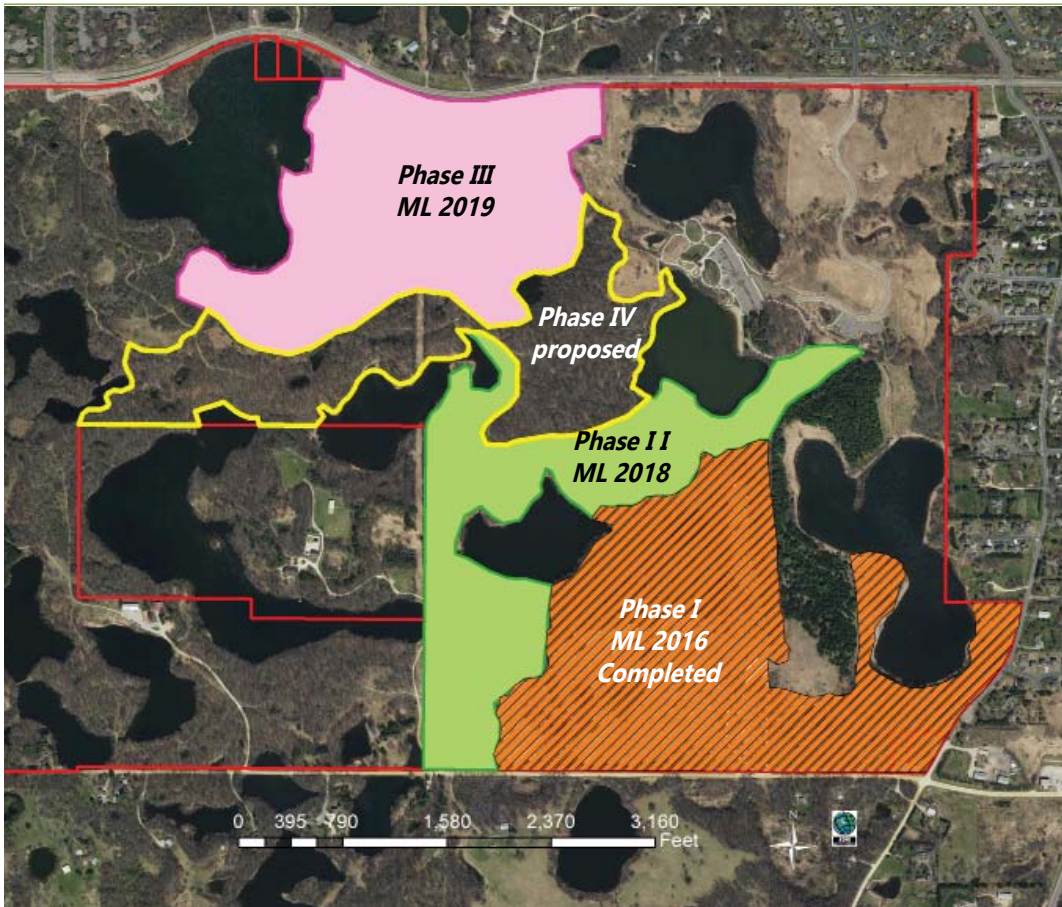


Spring Lake Park Reserve comprises 1,100 acres of natural area in Dakota County. The reserve is situated overlooking the Mississippi River.

The focus of this project is to enhance 200 acres of prairie within the reserve to provide habitat for the regal fritillary butterfly. This will be accomplished through planting and seeding of native violets by both volunteer community members and contractors.

The fritillary requires 120 to 240 acres of prairie with a healthy population of violets to thrive. Dakota County staff are already discussing donor butterfly populations with other agencies to reintroduce the fritillary once the habitat has been enhanced.

Lebanon Hills Phase IV, Dakota County



Lebanon Hills Regional Park comprises 2,000 acres of natural area in Dakota County. Phase IV is a continuation of important oak savanna and woodland habitat enhancement within the park.

Phase IV will:

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



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

RESTORING LAND, WATER, AND WONDER

Valley Park Phase II, Dakota County



Valley Park comprises 90 acres of natural area in Mendota Heights. Phase II is a continuation of important oak woodland and pollinator habitat with in the park. The park has been identified as the western beginning of Dakota County's River to River Pollinator Habitat corridor.

Phase II will:

Enhance 15 acres of oak woodland through invasive species removal. Followed by seeding and planting of native understory vegetation. Removal of exotic species, such as buckthorn, has resulted in an increase in ground cover which benefits invertebrate pollinator species.

West Wood Hills Nature Center, Hennepin County



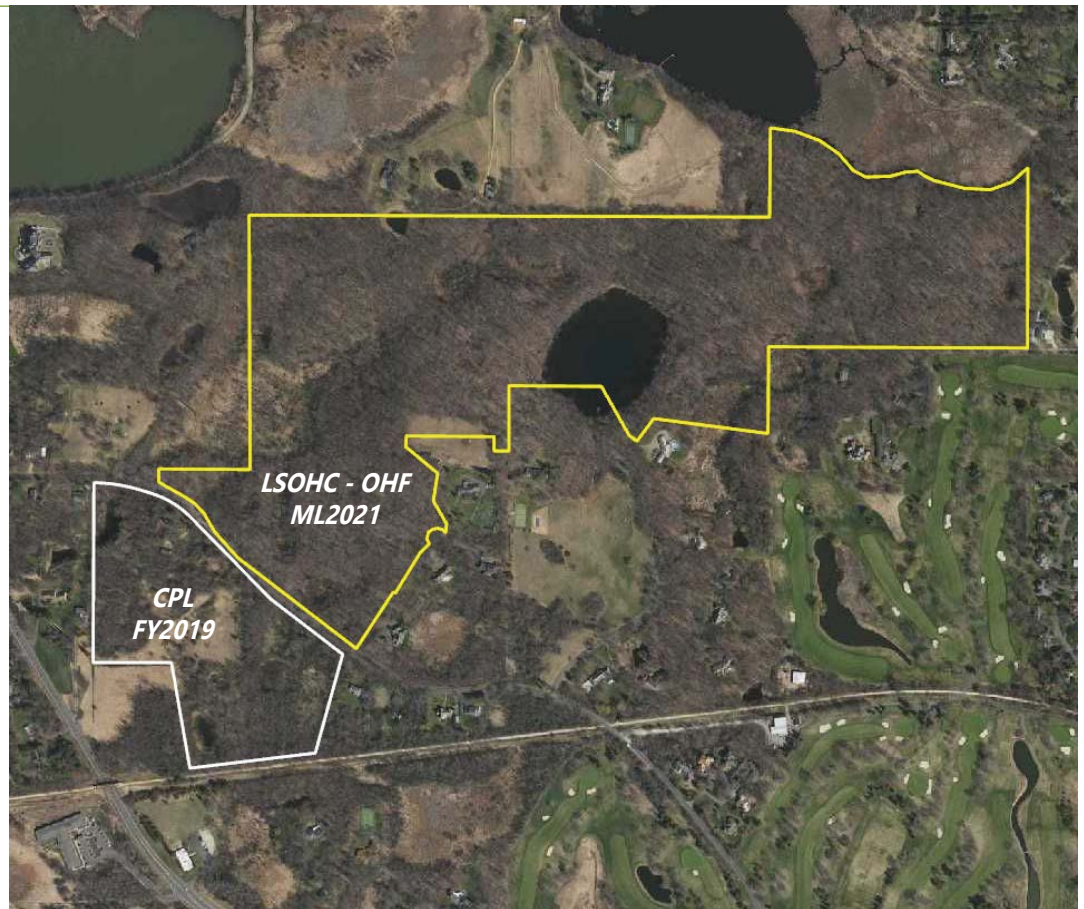
Westwood Hills Nature Center is a 160-acre natural area featuring marsh, woods and restored prairie. The preserve is beautiful throughout the seasons and provides homes for many animals, including deer, turtles, fox, mink and owls.

Great River Greening has been working directly with the City of St. Louis Park as it has undertaken three phases of restoration and enhancement, supported by other funding sources. These phases are outlined in the 2017 Natural Resource Management Plan adopted by the city for the nature center.

This project will allow the city to complete the fourth and final phase of habitat enhancement activities at Westwood Hills Nature Center.

RESTORING LAND, WATER, AND WONDER

Wood-Rill SNA, Hennepin County



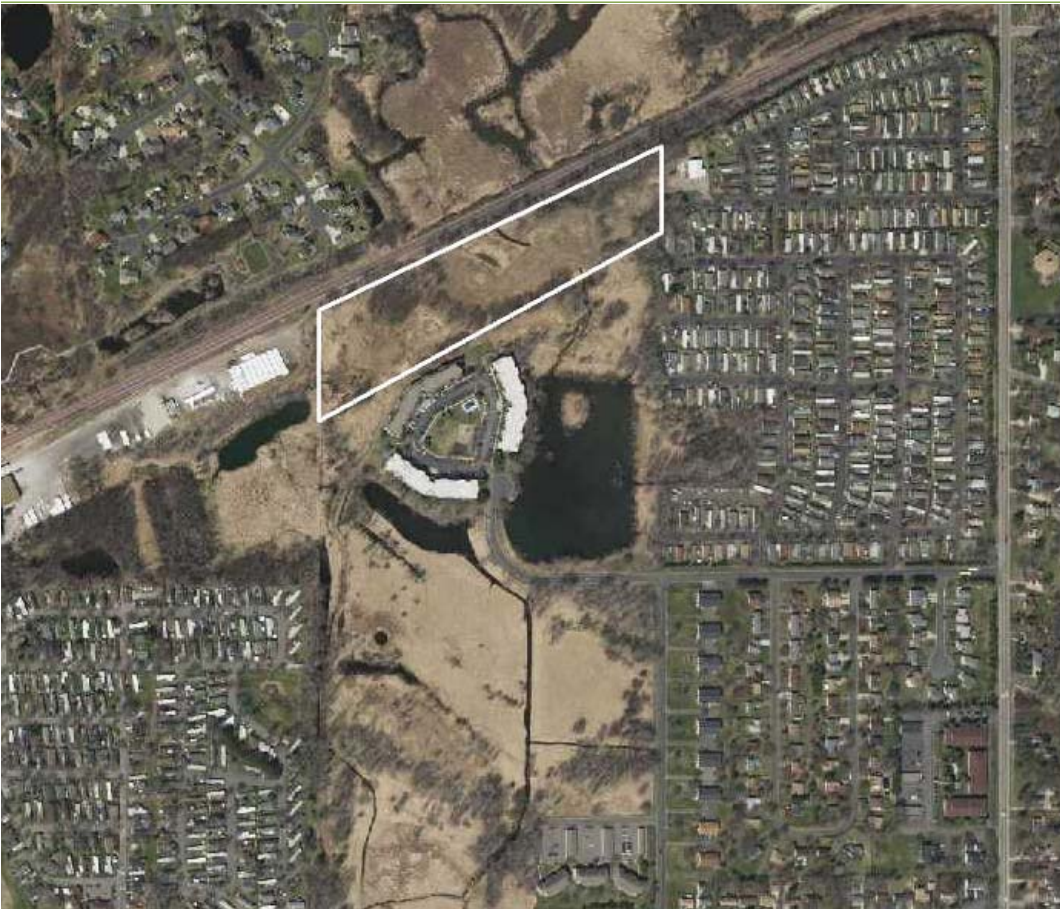
Wood-Rill SNA preserves an outstanding example of Sugar Maple “Big Woods” forest. This forest type is ranked S2, or imperiled, in the state and is increasingly rare in the developing metro-area.

The project will:

Enhance 40 acres of Sugar Maple forest in the northern unit. This builds on the woody invasive treatment that was completed in the southern unit through a CPL grant. Though not as dense of an infestation in the northern unit, buckthorn and honeysuckle have started getting a foot hold around area where there are gaps in the canopy.

Removal of exotic species at an early stage makes sure that the fragile habitat of the site stays intact and is not degraded.

Jim's Prairie, Ramsey County

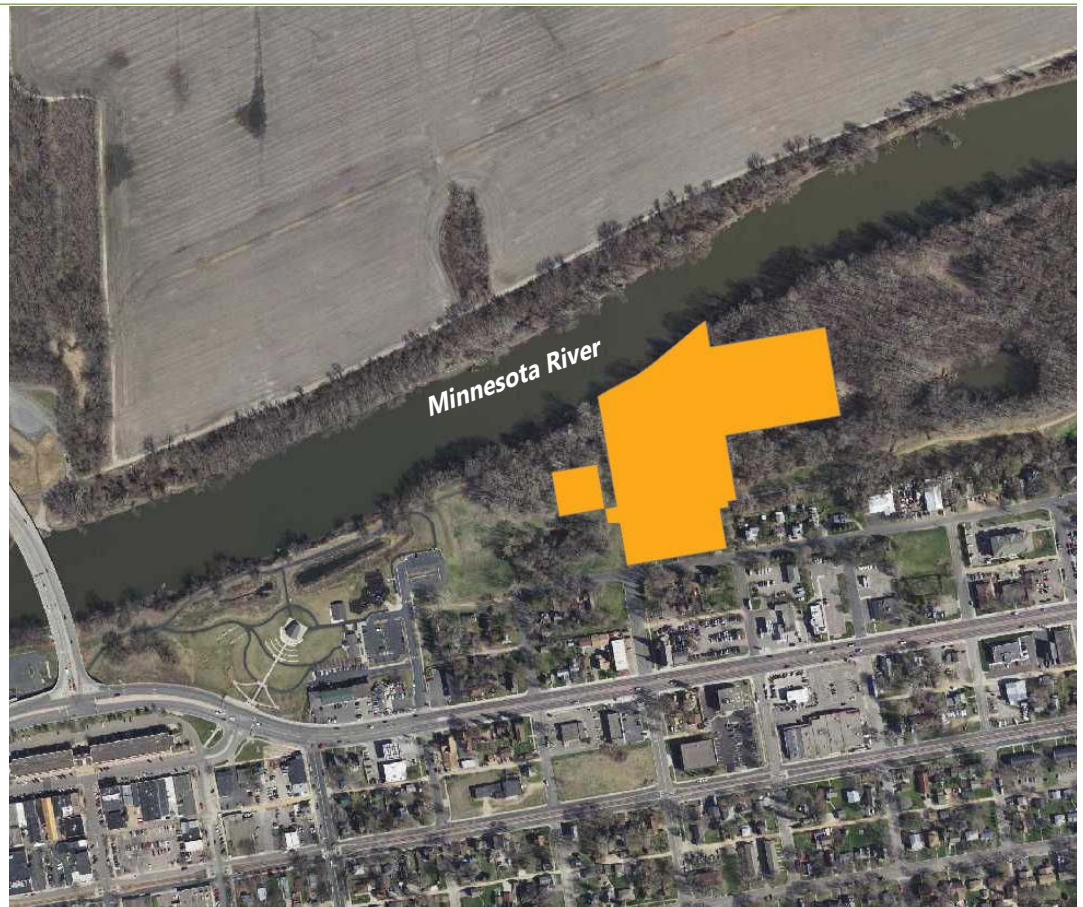


Jim's Prairie is a gem in the heart of Maplewood and good example of wet prairie in Ramsey County. The prairie is home to over 150 different plant species.

Spring is alive with insects and birds. The swamp saxifrage unfurls its thick velvety leaves, and the wood betony and strawberries bloom. Summer gives way to a riot of colors: meadow blazing star and mountain mint reign. Fall color arrives early in the prairie with vivid yellow goldenrods, white and blue asters, and purple gentians.

The prairie needs enhancement as some invasive herbaceous species have started to establish. Though the prairie is still intact, quick enhancement focused on removing the invasives is needed to ensure the prairie does not degrade.

Huber Park, Scott County



Huber Park, in downtown Shakopee, is located along the Minnesota River and provides access to the Minnesota Valley State Trail. The City of Shakopee recently acquired land east of the park, which will provide an access point for canoes and kayaks to the Minnesota River.

The site is currently a degraded floodplain forest and needs habitat enhancement to restore the floodplain habitat. Activities will include invasive species removal, floodplain tree and shrub species planting, and seeding.

Spring Lake Regional Park, Scott County



Spring Lake Regional Park is 373 acres in size with shoreline along both Spring Lake and Prior Lake. The property contains a diversity of natural habitats from lakeshore to Maple-Basswood forests. There is a small creek that winds through its diverse wetland complex that includes open water wetlands, cattail marshes, and a tamarack swamp.

This project will focus on an area of Oak Forest on the east side of the park. Total area involved will be 10 acres. The areas was selected as it is adjacent to a neighborhood and park trail access point. This will allow for direct engagement with community members while work is underway, educating the community on the need for land management and activities they could accomplish on their own lots.

The main component of the enhancement work focus on invasive species removal and management. As a follow up to the invasive species removal, the understory and groundplain will be seeded and planted with appropriate native species to improve pollinator and bird habitat.

RESTORING LAND, WATER, AND WONDER

Bassett Creek Park, Hennepin County



Bassett Creek Park is the City of Crystal's largest park at 85 acres. This park is located on Bassett Creek. The land west of Bassett Creek is focused on habitat and passive recreation.

This project will:

Enhance 22 acres of forest in the northwest of the park through invasive species removal and seeding.

The work will increase native pollinators and woodland bird species inhabiting similar complex.

Crystal Spring SNA, Washington County



Crystal Spring SNA is a more recent addition to the state's SNA program, being added in 2016. The site is the location of natural springs that flow out of the sandstone and support brook trout in the lower portions of the creek. The Red Oak - Basswood forest received an A-rank (excellent) when being mapped by the Minnesota Biological Survey.

The project will:

- Enhance 38 acres of Red Oak - Basswood forest along the bluffs of the St. Croix River.

- Removal of exotic species at an early stage makes sure that the fragile habitat of the site stays intact and is not degraded.

RESTORING LAND, WATER, AND WONDER

Falls Creek SNA, Washington County



Falls Creek SNA and Wind in the Pines Nature Park form a 200 acre habitat complex along the bluffs of the St. Croix River. The complex contains old growth forest, remnant bluff prairies and ephemeral streams.

This project will:

- Enhance 104 acres of forest through invasive tree removal and treatment of buckthorn and honeysuckle.

- Remove low-medium density woody invasive thickets from across the site before they can form denser stands.

- Removal of exotic species, such as buckthorn, will result in an increase in ground cover which benefits invertebrate pollinator species.

Lumber Jack Landing, Washington County



Lumberjack Landing is located one mile north of Historic downtown Stillwater, along the Brown Creek State Trail. The park is situated along a half mile of the St Croix River on 15 acres of land. Washington County holds a conservation easement on the property, which restricts any future development and requires the majority of the property to be restored to natural conditions.

The plan for the site is to start restoring the land through invasive species removal, tree planting, seeding, turf conversion, and river shoreline restoration.

RESTORING LAND, WATER, AND WONDER



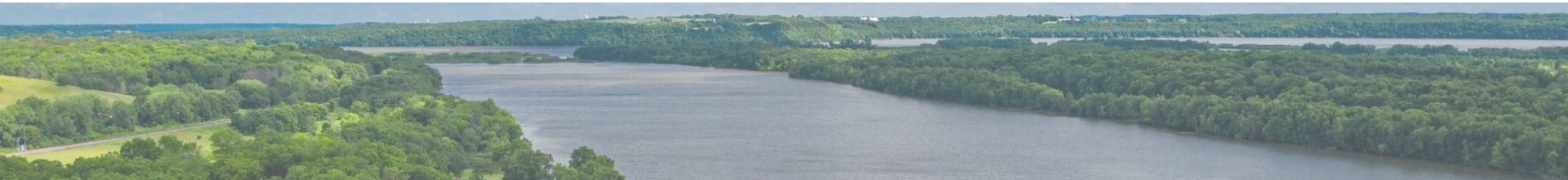
Supplemental Information for
Projects Submitted by Friends of
the Mississippi River - ML 2022



About FMR

Friends of the Mississippi River engages people to protect, restore and enhance the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities region.

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



FMR's restoration projects in this proposal are on ecologically important sites that impact water quality, provide habitat for wildlife, and are accessible to the public.

With the restoration work proposed here, the wildlife habitat value on these lands will be greatly enhanced. Three of the five sites provide access for hunting, fishing, or both.



Credit: KatieSteiger-Meister/USFWS

Project Goals and Deliverables

FMR will enhance a total of 635 acres at five sites on or near the Mississippi River.

Projects include removal of invasive woody and herbaceous plants, spot-mowing, spot-spraying, prescribed burns and seeding.

- Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park: Enhance 104 acres of oak forest.
- Hastings Sand Coulee SNA: Enhance 190 acres of prairie and 71 acres of oak forest.
- Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area: Enhance 165 acres of oak forest, 15 acres of restored prairie, and 4 acres of native prairie.
- Vermillion Falls Park: Restore 4 acres of prairie, enhance 13 acres of forest.
- William H Houlton Conservation Area: Enhance 70 acres of forest.



Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park - Cottage Grove, MN

Enhance 104 acres of oak forest through removal of invasive woody and herbaceous plants, planting and seeding.



Before and after photos from a previous FMR restoration at similar forest habitat in Cottage Grove Ravine Park

Hastings Sand Coulee SNA - Hastings, MN

Enhance 190 acres of prairie and 71 acres of oak forest through removal of invasive woody and herbaceous plants, spot-mowing, spot-spraying, prescribed burns and seeding.



Before and after photos from a previous FMR restoration phase at the SNA

Pine Bend Bluffs SNA - Inver Grove Heights, MN

Enhance 165 acres of oak forest, 15 acres of restored prairie, and 4 acres of native prairie through removal of invasive woody and herbaceous plants, spot-mowing, spot-spraying, prescribed burns and seeding.



Remnant and restored prairies from previous FMR restorations at the SNA

Vermillion Falls Park - Hastings, MN

Restore 4 acres of prairie and enhance 13 acres of forest through removal of invasive woody and herbaceous plants, spot-mowing, spot-spraying, prescribed burns and seeding.



Before and after photos from a previous FMR restoration along the trail at Vermillion Falls Park

William H. Houlton Conservation Area - Elk River, MN

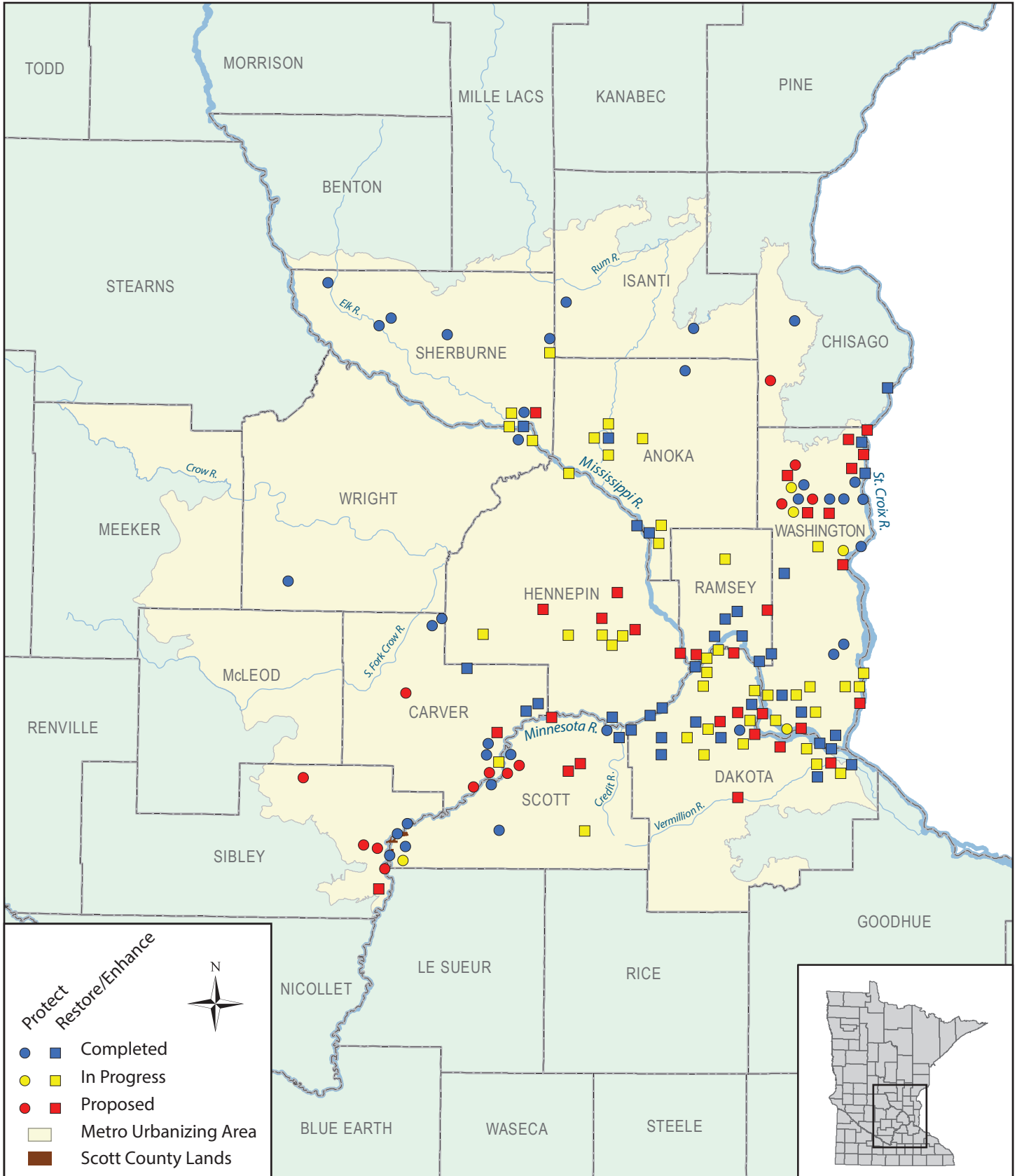
Enhance 70 acres of mixed hardwood and floodplain forest through woody follow-up, seeding, and planting



During and after photos from a previous phase on separate acres at WHHCA.

Metro Big Rivers Habitat Partnership

Phase 12





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							
ECOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE							
		0	0	0	0	0	0
SIZE/QUANTITY (25 PTS)		Points					
Size: Acres of existing habitat to be protected by an easement	25	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL:	25	0	0	0	0	0	0
CONDITION/QUALITY (25 PTS)		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						
SUBTOTAL:	25	0	0	0	0	0	0
LANDSCAPE CONTEXT (50 PTS)		Points					
Protected Lands Context (18 pts)							
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
Ecological Context (18 pts)							
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
Prioritization Context (14 pts)							
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						
SUBTOTAL:	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
COST							
Bid amount (\$/per acre)							
Donative value (\$/acre)							
TOTAL ACQUISITION COST:		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -



May, 17 2021

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

RE: Letter of Support – Metro Big Rivers Phase 12

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter is to serve as our support for Great River Greening, as a member of the Metro Big Rivers Partnership, as they seek funding through the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund as created by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment for the implementation of habitat restoration, protection, and enhancement of the native ecosystems of Minnesota, in addition to expanding access of those resources to the communities in which they are located.

We support this request for assistance on the Metro Big Rivers Phase 12 proposal as it will expand the environmentally conscious opportunities for land management and natural resource preservation. We also support Great River Greening's efforts to demonstrate the conservation and stewardship that everyday individuals can participate in with these public projects, as well as gain understanding of practices outlined within the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan that will continue to maintain the quality of Minnesota's natural areas.

Great River Greening's effort to inspire and lead local communities in restoring and conserving the land and water that enrich our lives will be exemplified through the work outlined in this proposal, and our organization would like to partner with that effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Abbi Jo Wittman".

Abbi Jo Wittman, City Planner



May 19, 2021

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

RE: Letter of Support – Metro Big Rivers Phase 12,

This letter is to serve as our support for Great River Greening, as a member of the Metro Big Rivers Partnership, as they seek funding through the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund as created by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment for the implementation of habitat restoration, protection, and enhancement of the native ecosystems of Minnesota, in addition to expanding access of those resources to the communities in which they are located.

We support this request for assistance on the Metro Big Rivers Phase 12 proposal as it will expand the environmentally conscious opportunities for land management and natural resource preservation. Our project, in particular, at Lebanon Hills Regional Park, is a piece that will connect and buffer other restored areas of the park and improve the habitat for a variety of wildlife such as Blanding's turtles that use this site as a refuge. We also support Great River Greening's efforts to demonstrate the conservation and stewardship that everyday individuals can participate in with these public projects, as well as gain understanding of practices outlined within the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan that will continue to maintain the quality of Minnesota's natural areas.

Great River Greening's effort to inspire and lead local communities in restoring and conserving the land and water that enrich our lives will be exemplified through the work outlined in this proposal, and our organization would like to partner with that effort.

Sincerely,

Joseph Walton
Senior Ecologist
Dakota County Parks

Dakota County Parks

P 952-891-7000 F 952-891-7097 W www.dakotacounty.us
A Dakota County Western Service Center • 14955 Galaxie Ave. • Apple Valley • MN 55124

