



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Rum River Corridor Fish and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement - Phase 2

ML 2023 Request for Funding

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### General Information

**Date:** 05/31/2022

**Proposal Title:** Rum River Corridor Fish and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement - Phase 2

**Funds Requested:** \$3,500,000

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Chris Lord

**Title:** District Manager

**Organization:** Anoka Conservation District

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### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Mille Lacs, Anoka and Isanti.

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

- Northern Forest
- Metro / Urban

**Activity types:**

- Enhance

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Habitat

## Narrative

### **Abstract**

The Wild and Scenic Rum River is a State Water Trail linking Mille Lacs Lake to the Mississippi River. Providing habitat for SGCN across two ecological provinces, the Rum also supports game fish and waterfowl. Land conversion, drainage, increased runoff, accelerated bank erosion, and invasive species threaten ecosystem stability of the Rum River corridor. SWCDs, counties, watershed groups, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, and The Nature Conservancy have come together to enhance walleye and smallmouth habitat and riparian ecosystems over the next 5 years by reducing erosion, installing structure, restoring hydrology, and enhancing native vegetation throughout this critical corridor.

### **Design and Scope of Work**

The Rum River Corridor is critical for habitat and species richness for SGCN, and is included in the mapped Wildlife Action Network in Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan. High development pressure along the Rum River, historic drainage system alteration, increased stormwater runoff, sedimentation, invasive species, and hydrologic changes all threaten the stability of this key wildlife corridor. While the Rum River continues to support a good fishery, the aforementioned threats have accelerated bank erosion and habitat degradation, undermining this robust ecosystem. Fortunately, opportunities abound to enhance smallmouth bass, walleye and other game fish habitat as well as riparian ecosystems by reducing erosion, installing structure, and enhancing native vegetation. To enhance the habitat value of this critical river corridor, we're partnering with Anoka County commissioners and staff, Rum River watershed organizations and partnerships, Isanti and Mille Lacs SWCDs, Isanti County, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, and The Nature Conservancy. We've also engaged DNR East Metro Fisheries as an advisor for in-stream fish habitat components. ACD will be the grant recipient and project lead.

This proposal improves wildlife habitat throughout the Rum River corridor in three categories: streambank and in-channel stabilization; in-stream fish habitat with a focus on game fish; and riparian forest, wetland, and prairie enhancement in the Shoreland Zone. Projects will span from the Mille Lacs Lake outlet to the confluence of the Rum and Mississippi rivers in the City of Anoka. We anticipate enhancing 2,200 feet of streambank, 1,200 feet of in-stream fish habitat, and 115 acres of habitat including wild rice on tribal lands.

Phase 1 work to address actively eroding Rum riverbanks in Anoka County with wildlife-friendly bioengineering techniques is well under way. Phase 2 will expand the eligible area of this work to include all of the Rum River Corridor. Each stabilization project will include discrete elements designed solely to enhance habitat. Eighty actively eroding streambanks in need of shoreline stabilization and enhancement were inventoried in Anoka County alone.

With guidance from DNR, in-stream features such as rock vanes and woody overhangs will be installed to provide holding and resting areas for game fish and forage in stretches of the river where structure is lacking. These features will increase habitat and fishing opportunities in areas not being enhanced with bank stabilization structure. Approximately 40 miles of shoreline are publicly owned along the Rum River where fish habitat enhancement will be prioritized, improving opportunities for quality shore fishing.

Riparian habitat enhancement will extend throughout portions of the 2,500 acres of tribal, publicly owned, and permanently protected lands in the Shoreland Zone to enhance the connectedness and function of the corridor for all wildlife. The type of enhancement will be based on the habitat types present (forest, wetland, and prairie) and conservation need, including rare species. Enhancing each of these areas will help ensure this valuable corridor remains functionally intact for all types of wildlife from fish to migrating birds, and will improve recreational quality on a Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River.

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

The Rum River Corridor is a key river stretch for habitat and species richness for SGCN. The threatened turtle species *Emydoidea blandingii* (Blanding's Turtle) has been documented numerous times, as well as *Glyptemys insculpta* (wood turtle) once. Two special concern mussel species were found in the Rum River during the 2004 statewide mussel survey, *Ligumia recta* (Black Sandshell) and *Lasmigona compressa* (Creek Heelsplitter).

Additionally, special concern terrestrial species found near the Rum River include *Parkesia motacilla* (Louisiana waterthrush), *Pituophis catenifer* (Gophersnake), and *Buteo lineatus* (Red-shouldered hawk).

The value of the Rum River as a wildlife corridor lies in its continuity, connectivity, and habitat quality. The Rum River corridor is a narrow landscape feature under constant pressure of fragmentation and degradation. Although protected with Wild, Scenic, and Recreational standards, large properties along the Rum River continue to be subdivided and built on. Properties that are publicly owned or protected do not always have wildlife habitat as a primary function or purpose. This project will reconnect and enhance habitat connections laterally down the corridor and perpendicular across in-stream, riparian, and shoreland zone habitats.

A continuous, lateral corridor particularly benefits species like predatory game fish seeking areas to feed and spawn throughout the channel, and migrating wildlife like waterfowl and monarchs that follow connected corridors in flight. Cross-corridor habitat connections linking aquatic, floodplain, and terrestrial habitats benefit species like amphibians, turtles and other reptiles, and nesting waterfowl in the spring that depend on these transitional zones. Reconnecting eroding and degraded gaps in high quality habitat both down and across the corridor will benefit a multitude of other wildlife species.

Before and during construction, we will consult with experts in the field to implement, or even develop, best practices to mitigate mussel loss. Project designs will incorporate wildlife friendly elements and traversable infrastructure for amphibians and reptiles that often get trapped in traditional riprap projects. SGCN and wildlife in general will benefit from these practices and design elements.

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

A riverbank erosion inventory performed by ACD prompted a multi-pronged, two-phase plan between ACD and Anoka County to address the expansive erosion and habitat loss on the Rum River. Due to its local and regional importance, Anoka County pledged over \$400,000 in match for grant acquisition over a 5-year period to enhance and improve the Rum River. LSOHC, Clean Water Fund, and Conservation Partners Legacy funds are being leveraged in unison to achieve the greatest benefit to the Rum River possible. Clean Water Fund dollars are hard-arming the largest eroding streambanks with the most water quality benefit, while OHF and CPL funds are being used to enhance habitat and eroding shorelines suitable to bioengineered solutions. The majority of local match from Anoka County or secured by ACD, are being put towards OHF grants as the lynchpin funding source to address the Rum River Corridor holistically over that brief period.

## **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:**

The Rum River Corridor is part of the Wildlife Action Network mapped in Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan. Additionally, the MN County Biological Survey identifies 19 unique native plant communities and 17 sites of moderate to outstanding biodiversity significance along the Rum River. There are also 35 instances of 13 unique rare species or habitats mapped on the Natural Heritage Information System immediately adjacent to the Rum River through Anoka and Isanti Counties, including two threatened turtle species (Blanding's Turtle and Wood Turtle). While outstanding biodiversity, native habitats, and even rare species exist along the Rum River, habitat loss and fragmentation are constant realities in developing areas.

Streambank erosion is accelerating due to increased flow. To address habitat discontinuity from streambank erosion, a 360° photo-inventory and GIS analysis of streambank condition of the Rum River through Anoka County were combined to identify eighty damaged and eroding riverbank stretches. The stretches were categorized by optimal stabilization approach, and an annual sediment load was calculated for each using the WI NRCS Field Office Technical Guide for streambank erosion. All eighty stretches identified were ranked by cost effectiveness for water quality benefit. Only those projects with a high potential for habitat enhancing bioengineering approaches, and a high-ranking cost effectiveness for water quality improvement, will be considered for this project. The same process of identifying and ranking projects in upstream counties is planned for 2022.

Properties in public and tribal ownership, or protected by permanent conservation easement, will be targeted for habitat connectivity across habitat types. These locations ensure that projects will never be removed and maximizes the value to those who recreate along the river. Approximately 69 miles of Rum River shoreline are in permanent conservation easement or tribal or public ownership. Strategically enhancing habitat in areas like parks and easements where shoreline is mowed to the edge, or degraded floodplain areas exist will help to ensure that we keep the Rum River corridor as in-tact as possible for wildlife. Many of the areas of biodiversity significance and rare habitats mapped along the Rum River occur in these public and protected properties.

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

- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation

**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:**

Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework:

Metropolitan/Urbanizing area Long-term results (pg. 64). Healthy aquatic habitat for fish game and other wildlife species, abundant access for outdoor recreation, healthy watersheds and clean water, prolific fish, game and other wildlife populations.

Northern Forest area Long-term results (pg. 56). Healthy terrestrial and aquatic habitat for fish, game and other wildlife species, healthy watersheds and clean water.

Minnesota’s Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025:

“Goal 1, Objective 1 focuses on maintaining and enhancing the resilience of habitats upon which SGCN and other wildlife depend... to “sustain and enhance species, habitat, and landscape biological diversity within the Wildlife Action Network” and Objective 1.2 to “maintain or enhance habitat in at least 6 Conservation Focus Areas.”

Examples of conservation actions for Objective 1 include maintaining and restoring terrestrial and aquatic habitat connectivity...” (pg. 34-35).

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

**Metro / Urban**

- Protect, enhance, and restore riparian and littoral habitats on lakes to benefit game and nongame fish species

**Northern Forest**

- Restore and enhance habitat on existing protected properties, with preference to habitat for rare, endangered, or threatened species identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey

**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:**

This project will enhance the Rum River Corridor, a key river reach for SGCN, part of the Wildlife Action Network, and a state designated Outstanding Resource Value Water. In the Metropolitan Urbanizing Areas of Anoka and Isanti Counties, we will be protecting a vital habitat corridor along one of the highest quality metro streams in the state. In the Northern Forest Area of Mille Lacs County, we will be restoring and enhancing critical habitat along a high quality stream and wildlife corridor. Approaching the Rum River holistically with numerous partners will help ensure this valuable corridor, which crosses two LSOHC planning sections, remains high quality, functionally intact for all types of wildlife from fish to migrating birds, and will also improve recreational quality on a Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River.

The lasting benefits of this work will include improved water quality through reduction in direct sediment loading from eroding streambanks, reconnection of fragmented habitat across corridor habitat types, and increased habitat quality along a corridor of protected, public, and tribal lands. Other lasting benefits of this project will include enhanced wildlife viewing, hunting, and fishing opportunities on and near the Rum River. This is especially important along publicly accessible lands in the metro area where a large number of people only have the opportunity to be immersed in natural resources in these public areas.

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

- N/A

**Does this proposal include leveraged funding?**

Yes

**Explain the leverage:**

- \$200,000 is available in direct cash leverage from Anoka County
- \$50,000 is available in direct cash leverage from Anoka Conservation District
- \$50,000 is available in-kind from The Nature Conservancy
- \$50,000 is anticipated from the Upper and Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organizations.
- \$140,000 is planned as Direct Support Services match from Anoka Conservation District

**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 does not supplant or substitute for any current or previous funds used for the same purpose.

**Non-OHF Appropriations**

Year	Source	Amount
2003	Federal Funds, Other State Funds, Local funds, In-kind match, landowner funds	\$191,500
2012	Landowner funds, other local funds	\$4,300
2015	CCM crew labor, In-kind match, landowner and other local funds	\$90,500

2016	CCM crew labor, In-kind match, landowner and other local funds, other state funds	\$29,800
2017	CCM crew labor, landowner funds	\$15,800
2018	CCM crew labor, landowner funds	\$15,900
2020	Other state funds, Local funds, CCM crew labor	\$205,850
2021	Other state funds, Local funds, CCM crew labor	\$113,400

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

ACD and its partners are dedicated to sustaining the Rum River as a high quality water, ecological, recreational, hunting, and fishing resource and wildlife corridor. A variety of additional projects and funding sources are planned into the future to continue to build and sustain Rum River habitat and water quality. ACD will continue its legacy of streambank stabilization and habitat enhancement projects utilizing state and local funding sources. The Rum River 1 Watershed 1 Plan Partnership has an approved watershed plan to address water quality improvement through watershed management.

Through this project, we will work with all tribal land, public land, and easement managers along the Rum River to maximize habitat value in the corridor. Maintenance of completed projects will be performed by individual landowners or managers through maintenance agreements as part of individual project contracts. ACD holds maintenance agreements with many landowners, both public and private, with similar projects installed on their properties. Routine site inspections will be performed by ACD as part of the maintenance agreement terms with each landowner or manager.

**Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes**

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Annual	Project Manager	Maintenance plan developed site-by-site and by enhancement type with project manager.	Funding for individual projects contingent on signed maintenance agreement or maintenance schedule.	Follow-ups with landowner/manager on maintenance needs and provide any necessary technical assistance.
Years 1,3,5,9 after install	ACD	Site inspections by ACD	Work with project manager to bring maintenance into compliance with maintenance agreement.	-

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

**Mallard:** The estimated wetland habitat to support mallard population growth is 1 mallard pair per per 2.47 acres of wetland habitat. Estimated 65 acres wetland/shallow lake enhanced = 26 breeding pairs

**Monarch Butterfly:** Using the minimum of 30 milkweed needed to support one migrating monarch butterfly, and the conservative 100 stems/acre (of the 100-600 range), these floodplain and wetland fringe habitats will contribute 3.33 monarchs/acre to the population. Estimated 51 acres of streambank and floodplain = 170 monarchs.

Warm water river indicator species include sauger (2 lbs/acre), channel catfish (116 individuals/acre), and all mussel species (8,000 individuals/acre). An estimated 2.5 acres of aquatic habitat enhanced = 5 lbs sauger, 290 individual catfish, and 20,000 individual native mussels.

The indicator species for lakes, walleye (2 adults/acre) and northern pike (10 adults/acre), are present throughout the Rum River. An estimated 42.5 acres of stream and shallow lake aquatic enhancement = 85 adult walleyes, and 425 adult northern pike.

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

ACD has an active Outreach and Engagement Coordinator who focuses on engaging and connecting all communities in Anoka County to ACD’s programs. We also have a website tool for mapping projects, a blog describing project features and updates, and a Facebook page advertising projects and volunteer opportunities. Enhancing habitat in publicly accessible areas for wildlife viewing and shore fishing success greatly benefits all communities that use public space to recreate. These projects will make nature and wildlife more accessible to people who live in city centers or do not own large properties. Additionally, the Rum River begins in the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe tribal lands. The Band is actively working on projects to improve habitat, and particularly wild rice, in the upper reaches of the Rum River and Lake Ogechie. Partnering with the Band on projects in tribal lands and continuing these efforts downstream with this funding furthers that work and its effectiveness in the corridor. It also improves habitat and recreational value to the people of the Mille Lacs Band.

**Activity Details**

**Requirements**

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

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?**

- Permanently Protected Conservation Easements
- WMA
- County/Municipal
- Public Waters
- Other : Tribal land
- AMA

**Land Use**

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

No

**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	\$816,000	\$116,736	\$205,600	\$44,285	2	0	No

**Timeline**

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Project prioritization, ranking, and feasibility with partners	mid 2024
1,200 linear feet of fish habitat installed at public fishing areas	end 2026
2,200 linear feet of eroding bank stabilized	end 2027
65 acres of wetland or wild rice lake enhanced	end 2027
50 acres of riparian enhancement	early 2028

**Budget**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$332,300	\$310,000	Anoka County, ACD, WMOs, TNC private funds	\$642,300
Contracts	\$2,262,200	\$40,000	TNC private funds	\$2,302,200
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	\$767,400	-	-	\$767,400
Direct Support Services	\$138,100	\$140,400	ACD	\$278,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$3,500,000</b>	<b>\$490,400</b>	-	<b>\$3,990,400</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
TNC Restoration Ecologist	0.03	5.0	-	\$10,000	TNC private funds	\$10,000
ACD Specialist	0.47	5.0	\$166,200	\$150,000	Anoka County, ACD, WMOs	\$316,200
ACD Principle	0.22	5.0	\$111,300	\$100,500	Anoka County, ACD, WMOs	\$211,800
ACD Administrator	0.01	5.0	\$5,000	\$4,500	Anoka County, ACD, WMOs	\$9,500
ACD District Manager	0.09	5.0	\$49,800	\$45,000	Anoka County, ACD, WMOs	\$94,800

**Amount of Request:** \$3,500,000

**Amount of Leverage:** \$490,400

**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 14.01%

**DSS + Personnel:** \$470,400

**As a % of the total request:** 13.44%

**Easement Stewardship:** -

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

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

200,000 is confirmed from Anoka County

\$50,000 is confirmed from Anoka Conservation District

\$50,000 is confirmed in cash or in-kind leverage from The Nature Conservancy

\$50,000 is anticipated in direct cash leverage from the WMOs

\$140,000 is anticipated as DSS for ACD staff not invoiced

**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?**

The project would be scaled proportionately

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

The Personnel and DSS expenses would be scaled proportionately

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

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

The project would be scaled proportionately

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

The Personnel and DSS expenses would be scaled proportionately

**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?**

Personnel budgets are representative of position levels at ACD that are likely to contribute to the project, not actual staff people hired solely for this work. Actual staff hours for all programs are logged and applied to each program as individual hours are worked. Much of the work of Phase 1, along with other grant programs, will be finishing as this funding would come in. ACD staggers grant applications and programs so that new programs can pick up available FTE time before old programs completely phase out. In that way, ACD is able to retain highly qualified and dependable staff rather than having large ebbs and flows of staff. This strategy greatly increases efficiency and our ability to retain talent and expertise. Only hours logged directly to work on this program will be submitted for reimbursement. No individual staff position is fully funded by this program.

**Contracts**

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

100% of the dollars in the contract line will be spent on contracted enhancement work along the Rum River. All project development, survey, and design work will be performed under Professional Services and Personnel line items.

**Direct Support Services**

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

ACD tracks every staff hour by individual program worked towards. This rate will be applied only to those staff hours directly logged towards this grant program under the personnel budget in the tables provided. ACD calculated its DNR reviewed DSS rate at 30.25% following USDA guidelines. Less than half of this rate is requested for reimbursement (15%).

### Federal Funds

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

No

## Output Tables

### Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	118	118
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>118</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$3,500,000</b>	<b>\$3,500,000</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	68	0	0	0	50	118
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>118</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$2,958,400	-	-	-	\$541,600	\$3,500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,958,400</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$541,600</b>	<b>\$3,500,000</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	\$29,661

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-

Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$43,505	-	-	-	\$10,832

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

3,400 feet

**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 ~ *In the Metropolitan Urbanizing Region of Anoka and Isanti Counties, this project will enhance an estimated 68 acres and 3,000 feet of critical habitat in the Rum River Corridor, a key river reach for SGCN, part of the Wildlife Action Network, and a state designated Outstanding Resource Value Water. We will be enhancing a vital habitat corridor (shoreland to floodplain to in-stream) and improving water quality in one of the highest quality metro rivers in the state that is at high risk of degradation.*

**Programs in the northern forest region:**

- Increased availability and improved condition of riparian forests and other habitat corridors ~ *In the Northern Forest Region of Mille Lacs County, this project will enhance an estimated 50 acres and 400 feet of critical habitat in the Rum River Corridor, a key river reach for SGCN, part of the Wildlife Action Network, and a state designated Outstanding Resource Value Water. Water quality will be further protected in a very high quality resource upstream of reaches at risk of degradation.*

**Parcels**

**Sign-up Criteria?**

No

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

The parcels listed are the parcels in public ownership adjacent to the Rum River. We will work with property managers at all levels of public ownership, as well as landowners with permanent conservation easements, and tribal lands to address conservation and habitat needs on individual properties.

**Restore / Enhance Parcels**

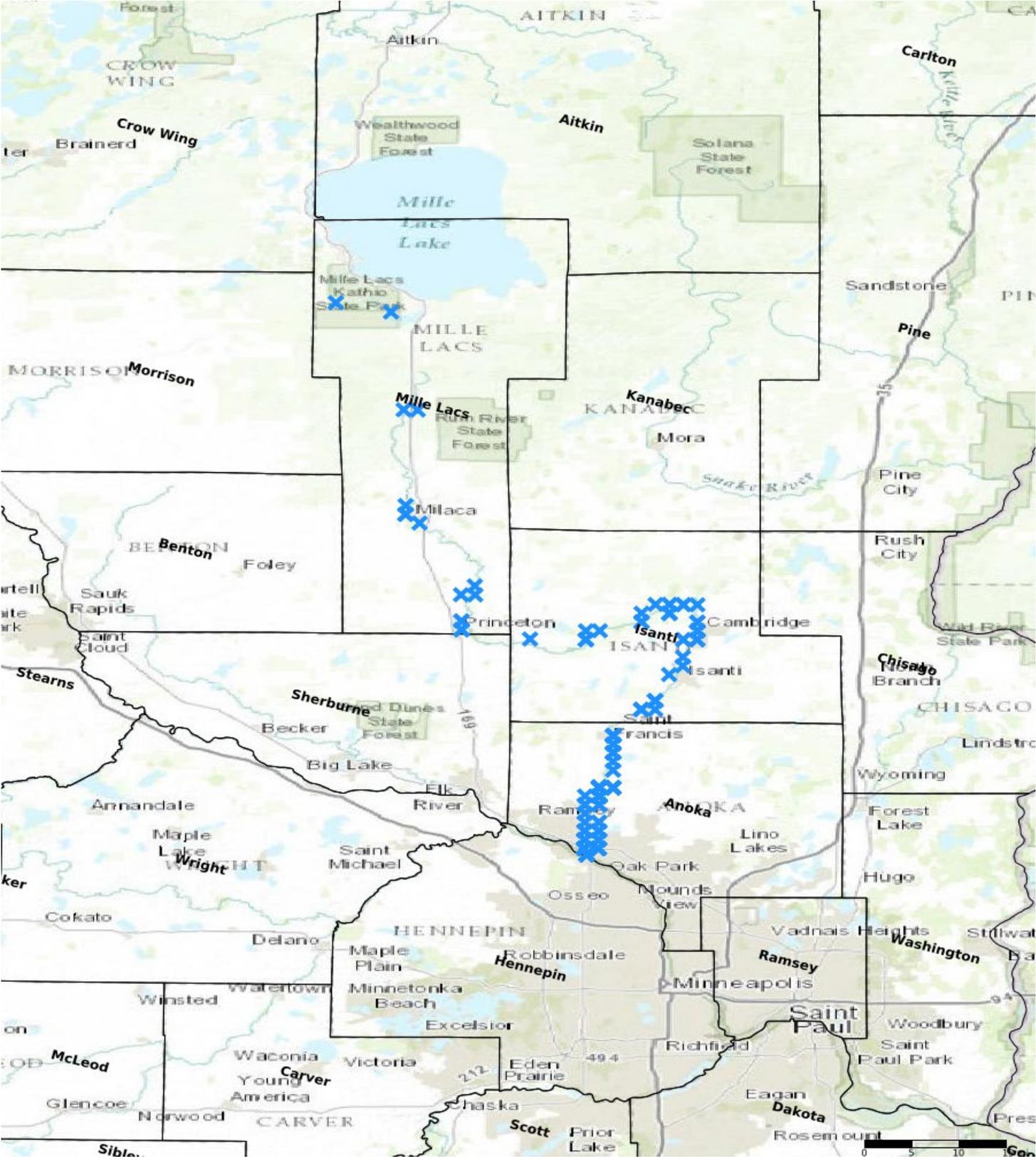
Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
115	Anoka	03225201	-	-	-
108	Anoka	03224206	-	-	-
107	Anoka	03224206	-	-	-
106	Anoka	03224206	-	-	-
105	Anoka	03324232	-	-	-
104	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
103	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
102	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
101	Anoka	03324232	-	-	-
100	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
99	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
98	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
97	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
96	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
95	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
94	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
93	Anoka	03224207	-	-	-
92	Anoka	03224206	-	-	-
91	Anoka	03224206	-	-	-
90	Anoka	03224206	-	-	-
89	Anoka	03324232	-	-	-
88	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
87	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
86	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
85	Anoka	03224206	-	-	-
84	Anoka	03224206	-	-	-
83	Anoka	03324232	-	-	-
82	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
81	Anoka	03324232	-	-	-
80	Anoka	03324232	-	-	-
79	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
78	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
77	Anoka	03324231	-	-	-
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42	Mille Lacs	03827226	-	-	-
196	Mille Lacs	04027225	-	-	-
47	Mille Lacs	04227225	-	-	-
46	Mille Lacs	04227220	-	-	-
45	Mille Lacs	04027226	-	-	-
44	Mille Lacs	03827226	-	-	-
43	Mille Lacs	03827236	-	-	-

### Parcel Map



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

# Rum River Corridor Fish and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement - Phase 2



## PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

The Rum River connects Mille Lacs Lake to the Mississippi River. Providing habitat for SGCN across two ecological provinces, the Rum also supports game fish and waterfowl. Land conversion, drainage, increased runoff, accelerated bank erosion, and invasive species threaten ecosystem stability of the Rum River corridor. SWCDs, counties, watershed groups, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, and The Nature Conservancy have come together to enhance walleye and smallmouth habitat and riparian ecosystems over the next 5 years by reducing erosion, installing structure, restoring hydrology, and enhancing native vegetation throughout this critical corridor.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Improve game fish habitat and fishing opportunity with in-stream habitat elements on targeted public properties
- Reconnect aquatic and riparian areas with natural materials providing habitat that is traversable by wildlife
- Reduce sediment loading to the river, improving water quality, fish spawning beds, and mussel habitat
- Benefit many species including SGCN by enhancing riparian forest, wetland, and prairie habitats in the shoreland zone
- Expand productive acreage of wild rice (Manoomin) on tribal lands

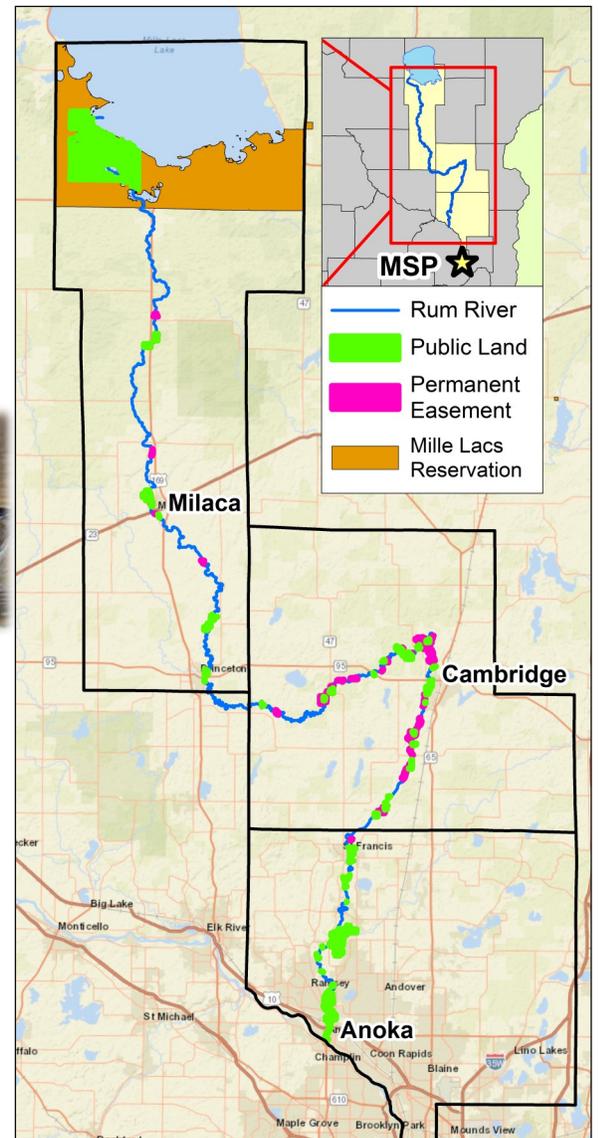


## PROJECT OUTPUTS

- Bank stabilization and in-stream habitat enhancement for walleye, smallmouth bass and mussels along 3,400 linear feet of riverbank
- 118 acres of in-stream and riparian forest, wetland, and prairie habitat enhancement for SGCN, waterfowl, game and non-game wildlife on public, protected, and tribal land
- Enhance fishing, hunting, and recreation opportunities throughout the Rum River corridor with a focus on game fish
- Reconnection of fragmented habitat across habitat types
- Reduce sedimentation by up to 600 tons per year
- Benefits extend across two ecological sections; Metropolitan Urbanizing and Northern Forest

## MINNESOTA'S RUM RIVER

- State Outstanding Resource Value Water
- State Wild, Scenic, and Recreational State Water Trail (150 miles)
- Key reach for Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN); several mussels, Blanding's turtle
- World-class smallmouth bass fishery
- Optimal river habitat for walleye and muskellunge
- Headwaters support wild rice (Manoomin)





## LONG-TERM STRATEGY

- Clean Water Fund - Stormwater runoff improved and severe bank failures stabilized utilizing CWF throughout the watershed (Rum River 1-Watershed 1-Plan)
- Rum River RIM - Secure perpetual conservation easements on targeted riparian properties utilizing RIM funds
- Conservation Partners Legacy - Address minor bank erosion with cedar tree revetments utilizing CPL funds
- Outdoor Heritage Funds - Enhance in-stream fish habitat and near channel wildlife habitat utilizing OHF funds
  - ◊ Phase 1 - (2020 - 2025) - Work addressing actively eroding Rum riverbanks in Anoka County with wildlife-friendly bioengineering techniques is well under way. Eighty sites in need were inventoried in Anoka County alone.
  - ◊ Phase 2 - (2023 - 2028) Expand Phase 1 efforts to all of the Rum River and add features to each project that solely enhance in-stream fish habitat
  - ◊ Phase 2 - (2023 - 2028) Enhance other habitats within the Shoreland Zone including: niche gamefish structure, riparian forests, wetlands, and prairies throughout the Rum River corridor
  - ◊ Phase 3 - (2026 - 2031) Continue Phase 2 efforts with a greater emphasis on riparian habitat enhancement targeted to SGCN
- Building lasting partnerships and capacity throughout the corridor for habitat enhancement projects led by partners
- Leverage city, watershed organization, county, SWCD, tribal, and non-profit organization staff and financial resources to sustain action. \$490,000 in leverage is secured for Phase 2

## Healing landscapes...



**Before**



**After**

## ... for generations



**Before**



**After**



## PROJECT PARTNERS

SWCDs



Counties



**Anoka County**  
MINNESOTA



**Isanti County**  
Minnesota

Non-Profits



Tribal Nations

Watershed Management Entities

**Rum River Watershed Partnership**





## Isanti County Environmental Services Division

555 18<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW  
Cambridge, MN 55008  
Phone (763) 689-8220

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May 24, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Isanti County Environmental Services Division, I am writing this letter of support for the Anoka County Soil & Water Conservation District's application for an Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant in order to further improve habitat and shoreline stabilization along the Rum River.

At over 150 miles long, starting at Mille Lacs Lake and ending at the Mississippi River in Anoka, the State Wild & Scenic Rum River covers a diverse landscape. Agricultural practices and urban development have created the need for increased protection and management of the river corridor.

Projects will provide water quality and habitat benefits, focused on enhancing the Rum River corridor as a wildlife habitat network. These include stabilizing eroding streambanks, creating fish habitat near publicly accessible fishing locations, wetland and forest enhancements in the floodplain, and upland work within the Shoreland zone on public or protected lands.

Anoka County's commitment to provide a local match of \$350,000 with assistance from the Rum River WMOs in Anoka County and The Nature Conservancy shows tremendous dedication to the success of this project.

While our primary focus is on Isanti County, we also support efforts to improve all areas of the Rum River watershed.

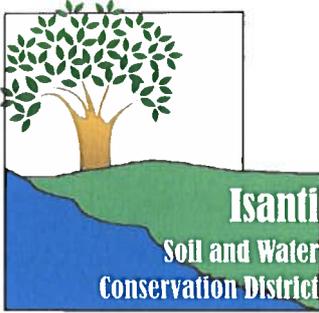
We enthusiastically support this application and hope you will view it favorably!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Barry Wendorf", is written over the typed name.

Barry Wendorf

Isanti County Environmental Services Division Leader



**ISANTI SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**110 Buchanan Street South**  
**Cambridge, MN 55008**  
**763-689-3271**

May 17, 2022

**RE: Rum River corridor habitat enhancement**

Dear Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council,

On behalf of the Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District, I am writing to express our support of the Anoka Conservation Districts' proposal to enhance habitat in the Rum River riparian corridor.

The Isanti SWCD encourages watershed-level projects that make progress toward goals set in the recently completed Rum River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan, which is slated to be approved by the State on May 25th, 2022. Within the plan, the Rum River is a high priority, and the actions identified in the Anoka Conservation District Proposal will accomplish plan goals specifically related to the Rum River. Furthermore, the Isanti SWCD fully supports projects that encourage collaboration across political boundaries; this project does just that.

Again, the Isanti SWCD fully supports this proposal.

Respectfully,

Jerry Schaubach, Chair  
Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District



**MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**



May 19, 2022

Jared Wagner  
Water Resource Specialist  
Anoka Conservation District  
1318 McKay Dr. NE  
Suite 300  
Ham Lake, MN 55304

Boozhoo Jared,

I am both delighted and eager to be writing a letter of support for your proposal and application of funding through the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council for habitat enhancement of the Misi-zaaga'igani-ziibi (Rum River) corridor. The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Department of Natural Resources strongly supports efforts with a focus on habitat enhancement especially as it pertains to manoomin (wild rice), one of our most sacred natural resources.

As you may be aware, Netamigamaag (Ogechie), Nesawegamaag (Shakopee) and Eshkwaagamaag (Onamia) lakes are all part of the upper Misi-zaaga'igani-ziibi system and are highly valued and heavily utilized resources where Mille Lacs Band Tribal members practice our treaty-affirmed harvest and gathering activities. Harvesting manoomin has been central to the Band's culture, subsistence and economy for generations. Within the Misi-zaaga'igani-ziibi corridor, manoomin is abundant with both spiritual and dietary significance to the Band and is an important aquatic plant that provides critical habitat to wetland and aquatic life. It should also be noted that the upper Misi-zaaga'igani-ziibi area is within the only EPA-designated sole-source aquifer in Minnesota, supplying at least 50% of the drinking water consumed in the area overlying the aquifer.

Restoration and enhancement efforts, such as those outlined in your application proposal, can only be viewed as a positive step in preserving this quality ecosystem. To this end, the Mille Lacs Band endorses such a pursuit and expresses our intent to collaborate in this effort.

Miigwech,

Kelly Applegate  
Commissioner of Natural Resources and Environment  
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

**DISTRICT I**

43408 Oodena Drive • Onamia, MN 56359  
(320) 532-7439 • Fax (320) 532-7514

**DISTRICT III**

45749 Grace Lake Road • Sandstone, MN 55072  
(218) 768-3311 • Fax (320) 384-6190

**DISTRICT II**

36666 State Highway 65 • McGregor, MN 55760  
(320) 384-6240 • Fax (218) 768-3903

**URBAN OFFICE**

1404 E. Franklin Avenue • Minneapolis, MN 55404  
(612) 872-1424 • Fax (612) 872-1257



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Historic Courthouse  
635 2<sup>nd</sup> St SE \* Milaca, MN 56353  
320-983-2160  
[www.millelacsSWCD.org](http://www.millelacsSWCD.org)

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May 11, 2022

**RE: Rum River corridor habitat enhancement**

Dear Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council,

The Mille Lacs Soil & Water Conservation District supports the Anoka Conservation District proposal to enhance habitat in the Rum River riparian corridor.

The Mille Lacs SWCD believes watershed-level partnerships will be key to successfully implementing the Rum River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. Within the plan, the Rum River is a high priority, and the actions identified in the Anoka Conservation District Proposal will accomplish plan goals specifically related to the Rum River.

The Mille Lacs SWCD supports this project proposal as one that will assist collaboration across political boundaries.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kurt Beckstrom".

Kurt Beckstrom, Vice Chair  
Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation District

Reviewed and approved at the 5/17/2022 Isanti SWCD Board meeting.

April 28, 2022

**Re: Rum River corridor habitat enhancement**

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council,

We understand that the Anoka Conservation District is applying for funds to enhance habitat in the Rum River riparian corridor. Our partnership of 7 counties, 9 soil and water conservation districts, 2 watershed organizations, and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe wish to express our support.

This project is a priority in the Rum River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan that we recently completed together. Planning took over two years. State approval of the plan by the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources is anticipated in May 2022, as other state agencies including the MN DNR have recommended approval. We are forming a joint powers entity to implement the plan together. This project would be a major first accomplishment.

While the Anoka Conservation District is applying for funding, it is a watershed-level project. Our discussions have focused on how to best manage the natural resources without respect to our political boundaries.

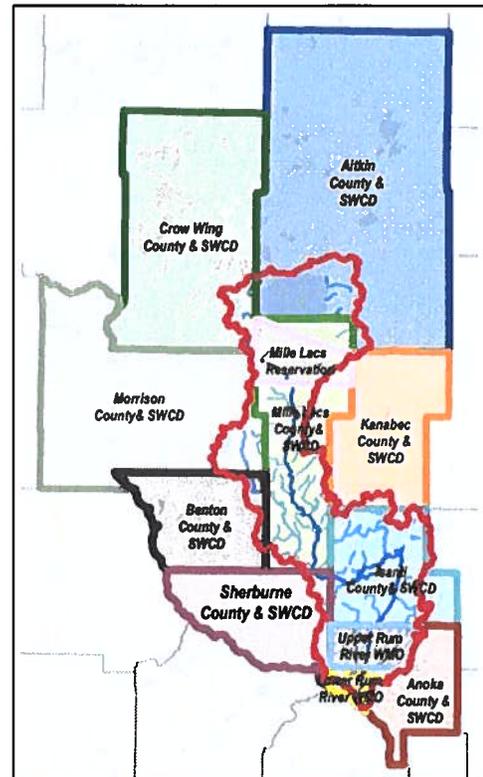
The Rum River corridor is widely recognized for its natural resources values. It is one of seven State scenic and recreational rivers. It is also a state water trail. Iconic resources including the Rum River State Forest are nearby. The river itself is a highly valued fishery for smallmouth bass, walleye, and northern pike.

We hope that you will give every positive consideration to funding habitat enhancement along the Rum River.

Respectfully,



Lisa Fobbe, Chair  
Rum River Partnership Policy Committee



Rum River watershed and local units of government.

Reviewed and approved at the 4/28/2022 Rum River Partnership Policy Committee meeting.