



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Metro Big Rivers 16  
ML 2026 Request for Funding

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### General Information

**Date:** 06/26/2025

**Proposal Title:** Metro Big Rivers 16

**Funds Requested:** \$21,386,800

**Confirmed Leverage Funds:** \$1,549,600

**Is this proposal Scalable?:** Yes

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Neal Feeken

**Title:** Executive Director

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

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### Location Information

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

**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 16 will protect 841 acres in fee title, restore 362 acres and enhance 1,030 acres of priority habitat in the big rivers corridors in the Metropolitan Urbanizing Area (2,233 acres total). Partners will attempt to leverage OHF grant by at least 10% 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 16 will protect, restore and enhance 2,233 acres of prioritized wildlife habitat in the Metropolitan Urban Area, with an emphasis on the Mississippi, Minnesota and St. Croix Rivers and their tributaries. Metro Big Rivers' work benefits wildlife and species in greatest conservation need (SGCN), improves water quality and in-stream food availability, increases wildlife-based recreational opportunities, and connects metro residents with nature.

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) will enhance 286 acres at 6 sites to increase native plant diversity, improve pollinator and wildlife habitat, bolster water quality, and improve public access to natural spaces. Projects include invasive woody plant removal, seeding and planting native prairie and forest species, mowing, spot-spraying, and prescribed burning. 24 acres of enhancement occur on remnant native prairie.

Great River Greening (GRG) will restore and enhance 227 acres of forest, prairie and other priority habitat at 11 sites. Projects include invasive tree removal, shoreline restoration, tree stand thinning, onsite biochar processing, planting and seeding native grass and wildflowers, planting climate-resilient trees and shrubs, mowing, herbicide application and spot-spraying, and prescribed burning.

Minnesota Valley Trust (MVT) will protect through fee acquisition 275 acres of river frontage, floodplain forest, wetland and upland habitat to expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Prospective lands are prioritized by the USFWS and will be restored/enhanced, then open for wildlife-based recreation. MVT will enhance an additional 444 acres of prairie/oak savanna habitat on multiple sites across Refuge units and will restore 15 acres of floodplain forest habitat in Hennepin County.

Trust for Public Land (TPL) will protect through fee acquisition 566 acres of priority wildlife habitat and restore/enhance 420 acres of prairie and forest habitat, across multiple sites including on a recently-acquired WMA complex. Prospective acquisition sites are prioritized in state, regional, and local natural resource plans. Lands will be managed by public partners and open for wildlife-based recreation.

## **Explain how the proposal addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation**

Metro Big Rivers projects protect and improve habitats needed by wildlife species in greatest conservation need (SGCN) and other targeted species. Many of Minnesota's forest and grassland SGCNs are migratory. Improving habitat along and near 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 Important Bird Area. This corridor provides critical habitat for neotropical migrant birds and numerous SGCN. FMR has been tracking breeding bird species at these sites, 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 forest, woodlands, prairie, riverine, lakeshore, and wetland habitat at 11 conservation sites.

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.

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 are the elements of this proposal that are critical from a timing perspective?**

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 expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:**

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.

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 top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?**

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

**Explain how this proposal will uniquely address habitat resilience to climate change and its anticipated effects on game, fish & wildlife species utilizing the protected or restored/enhanced habitat this proposal targets.**

The Metropolitan Urbanizing Area is expected to be impacted by climate change at a disproportional rate over other areas of Minnesota due to impacts stemming from the “heat island effect” and other factors. Metro Big Rivers partners use The Nature Conservancy’s climate resiliency data layer (Anderson, et. al. 2023), to inform land protection, restoration and enhancement. We work in climate-resilient areas, prioritize lands that increase connectivity and build habitat complexes, and select vegetation for plantings taking into account current climate adaptation models. This approach provides the best opportunities to reverse the decline in biodiversity caused by habitat loss and degradation, maintain biodiversity over the long-term and provide high-quality natural areas that support the ability of wildlife to move and adapt to stressors, including those accelerated by a changing climate.

**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 this project/program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife, and if not permanent outcomes, why it is important to undertake at this time:**

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

## 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.*

### **What other dedicated funds may collaborate with or contribute to this proposal?**

N/A

### **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.

### **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 partners will raise funds and work with partners to ensure the project benefits are maintained. FMR and GRG will continue hosting volunteer events to maintain habitat investments.

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, 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
Post-Acquisition, Ongoing	MVT, TPL, Public Partners	Post acquired property	Develop & implement habitat restoration and enhancement plans	Transfer property to public partner, steward

### Provide an assessment of how your program may celebrate cultural diversity or reach diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

MBR partners have a shared objective of providing all metro residents with high-quality natural spaces nearby. We believe everyone should be able to easily connect with nature, enjoy high-quality wildlife habitat and engage in wildlife-dependent recreation, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socio-economic status. Our projects benefit a diversity of communities, from lower-income, densely-populated neighborhoods to urbanizing suburban/rural areas. Examples of how MBR engages and benefits diverse communities include:

Friends of the Mississippi River and Great River Greening actively engage residents in habitat work in their neighborhoods through targeted outreach for volunteer events. Their youth programming targets young people from diverse backgrounds for exploring environmental careers. FMR's Environmental Stewards Institute increases underrepresented youth participating in environmental career pathway programs; at least 65% of participants identify as black, indigenous, or a person of color.

Metro residents can step off the light rail 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 and have a free lending program (e.g. snowshoes, fishing poles, field backpacks, binoculars). Their internship and apprenticeship program recruits a diversity of youth to explore the outdoors and conservation careers.

Through its partnership with the MN Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Trust for Public Land facilitates mentored hunting and angling opportunities for diverse communities on public lands and waters across Minnesota, with a focus on ones protected by the OHF. Like mentee participants, the mentors come from historically marginalized communities with diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. We know that seeing diversity in outdoor spaces helps foster a sense of representation, belonging and inclusion.

## Activity Details

### Requirements

**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 or on lands to be acquired in this program?**

Yes

**Where does the activity take place?**

SNA

Permanently Protected Conservation Easements

County/Municipal

WMA

Refuge Lands

## Land Use

**Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?**

Yes

**Explain what will be planted and include the maximum percentage of any acquired parcel that would be planted into foodplots by the proposer or the end owner of the property:**

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.

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this proposal either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**

No

**Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing?**

No

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

Yes

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

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 - <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota-valley/visit-us/activities/hunting>

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

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

State of MN

Federal

Local Unit of Government

County

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

WMA

National Wildlife Refuge

SNA

State Forest

AMA

Other : County Conservation Area

**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?**

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?**

Yes

### **Other OHF Appropriation Awards**

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

Yes

**Are any of these past appropriations still OPEN?**

Yes

<b>Approp Year</b>	<b>Funding Amount Received</b>	<b>Amount Spent to Date</b>	<b>Funding Remaining</b>	<b>% Spent to Date</b>
2025	\$6,949,000	-	-	-
2024	\$8,123,000	\$1,147,500	\$6,975,500	14.13%
2023	\$15,339,000	\$11,649,000	\$3,690,000	75.94%
2022	\$8,200,000	\$6,101,585	\$2,098,415	74.41%
2021	\$4,229,000	\$3,401,401	\$827,599	80.43%
2020	\$6,473,000	\$5,749,912	\$723,088	88.83%
Totals	\$49,313,000	\$28,049,398	\$21,263,602	56.88%

### **Timeline**

<b>Activity Name</b>	<b>Estimated Completion Date</b>
FMR - Enhance 286 acres	June 2031
GRG - Restore 57 acres and enhance 170 acres	June 2031
MVT - Protect 275 acres through fee title acquisition	June 2030
TPL - Protect 566 acres through fee title acquisition	June 2030
TPL - Restore and enhance 420 acres	June 2031
MVT - Enhance and restore 459 acres	June 2031

**Budget****Grand Totals Across All Partnerships**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Funding Request</b>	<b>Total Leverage</b>	<b>Leverage Source</b>	<b>Total</b>
Personnel	\$1,507,400	\$216,800	FMR, Cities, Foundations	\$1,724,200
Contracts	\$6,396,300	\$255,000	Cities, Foundations, MN Valley Trust, Foundation	\$6,651,300
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$8,500,000	-	-	\$8,500,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$3,750,000	\$350,000	-, MN Valley Trust	\$4,100,000
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$22,700	\$1,200	-, Private	\$23,900
Professional Services	\$115,000	-	-	\$115,000
Direct Support Services	\$377,100	\$726,600	FMR, Foundations, MN Valley Trust, Private	\$1,103,700
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$253,000	-	-	\$253,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$13,400	-	-	\$13,400
Supplies/Materials	\$352,700	-	-	\$352,700
DNR IDP	\$99,200	-	-	\$99,200
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$21,386,800</b>	<b>\$1,549,600</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$22,936,400</b>

**Partner: Trust for Public Land (TPL)**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$490,000	-	-	\$490,000
Contracts	\$1,000,000	\$75,000	Foundation	\$1,075,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$8,500,000	-	-	\$8,500,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$1,000,000	-	-	\$1,000,000
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	\$1,200	Private	\$1,200
Professional Services	\$115,000	-	-	\$115,000
Direct Support Services	\$115,800	\$115,800	Private	\$231,600
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$228,000	-	-	\$228,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	\$99,200	-	-	\$99,200
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$11,548,000</b>	<b>\$192,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$11,740,000</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
TPL Staff (Protection, Legal)	0.95	3.0	\$490,000	-	-	\$490,000

**Partner: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust (MVT)**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$476,000	-	-	\$476,000
Contracts	\$1,573,000	\$125,000	MN Valley Trust	\$1,698,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$2,750,000	\$350,000	MN Valley Trust	\$3,100,000
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	-	\$307,400	MN Valley Trust	\$307,400
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$25,000	-	-	\$25,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$4,824,000</b>	<b>\$782,400</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$5,606,400</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Restoration Ecologist	1.0	4.0	\$476,000	-	-	\$476,000

**Partner: Great River Greening**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$398,700	\$156,300	Cities, Foundations	\$555,000
Contracts	\$2,128,700	-	-	\$2,128,700
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$15,700	-	-	\$15,700
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$125,400	\$167,500	Foundations	\$292,900
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$12,400	-	-	\$12,400
Supplies/Materials	\$255,500	-	-	\$255,500
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$2,936,400</b>	<b>\$323,800</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$3,260,200</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
GRG Staff (Ecologist, technicians, etc.)	0.64	5.0	\$398,700	\$156,300	Cities, Foundations	\$555,000

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

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$142,700	\$60,500	FMR	\$203,200
Contracts	\$1,694,600	\$55,000	Cities, Foundations	\$1,749,600
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$7,000	-	-	\$7,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$135,900	\$135,900	FMR	\$271,800
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$1,000	-	-	\$1,000
Supplies/Materials	\$97,200	-	-	\$97,200
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$2,078,400</b>	<b>\$251,400</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$2,329,800</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
FMR Staff (Ecologists, Conservation Director, Bookkeeper, College intern)	0.37	4.0	\$142,700	\$60,500	FMR	\$203,200

**Amount of Request:** \$21,386,800**Amount of Leverage:** \$1,549,600**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 7.25%**DSS + Personnel:** \$1,884,500**As a % of the total request:** 8.81%**Easement Stewardship:** -**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** -

Total Leverage (from above)	Amount Confirmed	% of Total Leverage	Amount Anticipated	% of Total Leverage
\$1,549,600	\$1,549,600	100.0%	-	0.0%

**Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:**

Leverage includes committed and anticipated funds from the Metro Big Rivers partners, cities, private landowners, foundations and other private donors.

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

Yes

## 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). The reduction will not be exactly proportional, as partners have some fixed costs that do not change based on project size.

### **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 30% 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). The reduction will not be exactly proportional, as partners have some fixed costs that do not change based on project size.

### **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, TPL, MVT - Restoration / enhancement contracts with service providers.

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

## Professional Services

### What is included in the Professional Services line?

Appraisals

Design/Engineering

Other : Phase 1 Environmental Review

Surveys

## Fee Acquisition

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

4 to 7

## 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?

FMR – As of October 27, 2023, FMR's DSS rate has been approved by DNR staff. The 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.

GRG – As approved by the DNR in September 2024, 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.

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.

MVT is not requesting DSS but is offering all foregone DSS as leverage. MVT is estimating these costs at 15% on eligible line items.

## 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	300	45	17	362
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	498	498
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	343	343
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	535	493	2	1,030
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>2,233</b>

**Restoration/Enhancement Acres of OHF Acquired Lands (Table 1a.1)**

	RESTORE		Total	ENHANCE		Total
	Lands acquired in this proposal	Lands acquired with previous OHF appropriations (<5yrs old)		Lands acquired in this proposal	Lands acquired with previous OHF appropriations (<5yrs old)	
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	290	290	-	130	130
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	0	100	10	110
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>240</b>

**Restoration/Enhancement Acres Breakdown of Existing Protected Lands (Table 1a.2)**

	RESTORE		ENHANCE	
	Lands acquired with OHF	Lands NOT acquired with OHF	Lands acquired with OHF	Lands NOT acquired with OHF
DNR Lands (WMA, State Forests, etc)	0	0	175	250
Non-DNR Lands (city, state, federal, etc.)	-	0	-	780
Easements	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>1,030</b>

**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	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	\$886,300	\$785,600	\$255,000	\$1,926,900
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$9,282,000	\$9,282,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$4,016,000	\$4,016,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	\$2,685,000	\$3,476,900	-	\$6,161,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$3,571,300</b>	<b>\$4,262,500</b>	<b>\$13,553,000</b>	<b>\$21,386,800</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	362	0	0	0	0	362
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	498	0	0	0	0	498
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	343	0	0	0	0	343
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	1,030	0	0	0	0	1,030
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,233</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,233</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	\$1,926,900	-	-	-	-	\$1,926,900
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$9,282,000	-	-	-	-	\$9,282,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$4,016,000	-	-	-	-	\$4,016,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$6,161,900	-	-	-	-	\$6,161,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$21,386,800</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$21,386,800</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	\$2,954	\$17,457	\$15,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$18,638
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$11,708
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	\$5,018	\$7,052	\$0

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	\$5,322	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$18,638	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$11,708	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$5,982	-	-	-	-

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

6.34

## Parcels

### Sign-up Criteria?

No

### 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.

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

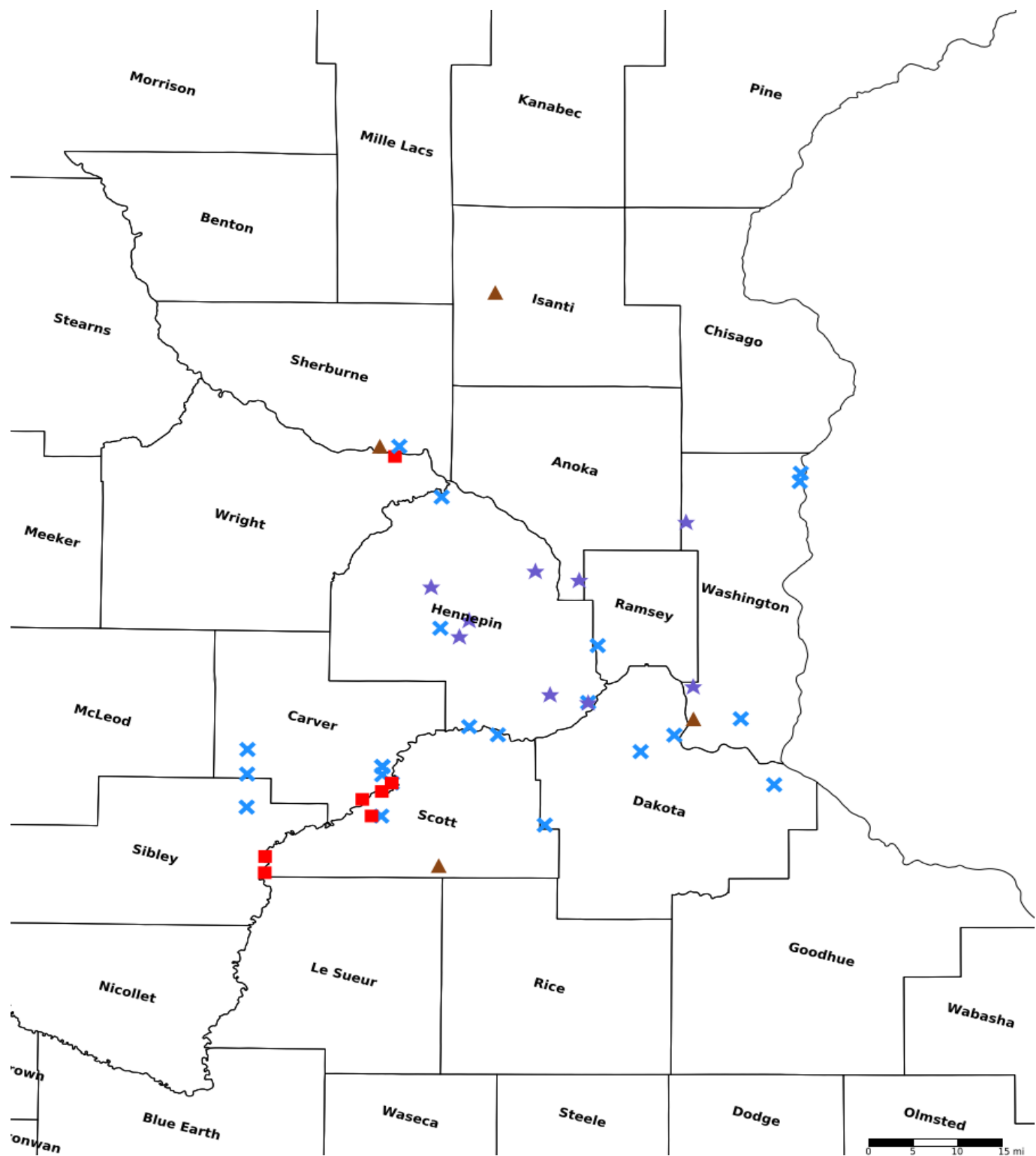
Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
GRG - Innsbruck Park Phase 2	Anoka	03024224	22	\$70,800	Yes	Enhance 22 acres of natural woodland area with additional funding to assist budgets in Phase 1 impacted by Prevailing Wage.
MVT - Rapids Lake Lundquist	Carver	11524236	50	\$27,500	Yes	Oak savanna enhancement
MVT - Rapids Lake Unit #2	Carver	11524225	57	\$25,000	Yes	Oak Savanna enhancement
MVT - Rapids Lake VC	Carver	11423206	1	\$5,000	Yes	Oak savanna
MVT - San Francisco Belter Unit	Carver	11424225	10	\$235,000	Yes	Oak Savanna enhancement
MVT -Perbix WPA	Carver	11526234	20	\$25,000	Yes	Grassland enhancement
MVT -Tiger Lake WPA	Carver	11526215	50	\$15,000	Yes	Grassland enhancement
MVT-Rapids Lake Unit North	Carver	11524225	90	\$530,000	Yes	Oak Savanna enhancement
FMR - Hastings Sand Coulee SNA	Dakota	11417202	88	\$511,500	Yes	Enhance 32 acres native prairie, and 56 acres forest
FMR - Pine Bend Bluffs SNA	Dakota	02722227	42	\$323,400	Yes	Enhance 42 acres forest
FMR - Rosemount Preserve	Dakota	11519216	24	\$110,980	Yes	Enhance 7 acres prairie and 17 acres forest
MVT -Soberg WPA	Dakota	11421235	25	\$5,000	Yes	Grassland enhancement
GRG - Brookdale Park	Hennepin	11921227	8	\$243,200	Yes	Restore 8 acres mesic prairie through turf removal conversion. Adjacent to water way connected to Shingle Creek that will require erosion control, soil stabilization and local watershed permitting.

GRG - Medina Lake Phase 2	Hennepin	11823202	2	\$98,100	Yes	Restore 2 acres of natural area through prairie establishment. Budget is based bid proposals received in fall 2024.
GRG - Parkers Lake Park	Hennepin	11822228	2	\$204,900	Yes	Restore 1800 lf of shoreline from 2 acres of turf grass to native vegetation along Parkers Lake.
GRG - Wayzata Nature Center - Phase 2	Hennepin	11722205	6	\$66,100	Yes	Enhance 6 acres of woodland through native species establishment with additional funding to assist budgets in Phase 1 impacted by Prevailing Wage.
GRG - Wood Lake Nature Center - Phase 2	Hennepin	02824233	10	\$156,400	Yes	Restore 10 acres of woodland through understory invasive removal and native establishment.
GRG - Wood Rill SNA	Hennepin	11823236	40	\$336,400	Yes	Enhance 40 acres forest through low density woody invasive species removal.
MVT - Long Meadow Lake	Hennepin	02723206	15	\$50,000	Yes	Floodplain restoration
MVT - Long Meadow Lake BLVC	Hennepin	02723206	12	\$250,000	Yes	Oak savanna
MVT - Upgrala Unit	Hennepin	11622233	72	\$100,000	Yes	Grassland/Wetland enhancement
MVT - Wilkie Unit	Hennepin	11522201	15	\$250,000	Yes	Oak savanna
GRG - Mississippi River Bluffs, Phase 1	Ramsey	02923232	22	\$432,400	Yes	Enhance 22 acres of river bluff forest and savanna
FMR - Camp Cozy	Sherburne	03326231	29	\$240,900	Yes	Enhance 29 acres forest
MVT - Redhead WPA	Sibley	11426222	40	\$25,000	Yes	Grassland/Wetland enhancement
FMR - Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park	Washington	02721214	81	\$734,990	Yes	Enhance 54 acres prairie, and 27 acres forest
GRG - Bailey School Forest phase 2	Washington	02822225	35	\$654,400	Yes	Restore 35 acres of oak forest. Restoration will require multiple rounds of invasive treatment including tree, shrub and herbaceous species. Reestablishment of native vegetations through planting tree and shrubs, seeding ground layer and planting forest nursery plots.
GRG - Crystal Spring SNA	Washington	03219218	40	\$336,500	Yes	Enhance 40 acres of forest through low density woody invasive species removal.
GRG - Falls Creek SNA, Phase 2	Washington	03219219	40	\$337,200	Yes	Enhance next 40 acres of forest through low density invasive species removal
TPL - Keystone Woods WMA	Washington	03121218	800	\$1,500,000	Yes	Restore 600 acres of prairie, enhance 200 acres of forest
FMR - Highlands of Riverpointe	Wright	12023212	22	\$156,630	Yes	Enhance 22 acres forest

**Protect Parcels**

<b>Name</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>TRDS</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Est Cost</b>	<b>Existing Protection</b>
MVT - Rapids Lake Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Carver	11423206	118	\$826,000	No
MVT - San Francisco Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Carver	11424212	168	\$546,000	No
MVT - San Francisco Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Carver	11424215	353	\$1,147,250	No
TPL - Green Lake SNA	Isanti	03625226	190	\$600,000	No
MVT - Blakeley Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Scott	11326236	194	\$630,500	No
MVT - St. Lawrence Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Scott	11424226	16	\$1,500,000	No
TPL - Ney WMA addition #3	Scott	11323225	193	\$1,500,000	No
TPL - Mississippi Sherburne North	Sherburne	03327235	34	\$1,200,000	No
MVT - Jessenland Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Sibley	11326224	367	\$1,835,000	No
TPL - Nesvig AMA	Washington	02722213	200	\$5,000,000	No
TPL - Mississippi River Conservation Area	Wright	12123218	133	\$3,500,000	No

Parcel Map



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



# Metro Big Rivers

Metro Big Rivers (MBR) 16 will protect, restore and enhance 2,233 acres of priority 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. Through Phase 15, MBR has protected and restored / enhanced 11,000+ acres of wildlife habitat in the metro area and has work in-progress on another 2,000 acres. MBR has leveraged OHF grants by > 50% with other funds and landowner donations of easement value to-date.

**ML2026 Request - \$21,386,800**  
**Leverage - \$1,549,600 (7.5%)**

**Protect 841 acres**  
**Restore & Enhance 1,392 acres**

With OHF and other leveraged funds, Metro Big Rivers 16 will permanently protect 841 acres in fee title, restore 362 acres and enhance 1,030 acres (2,233 acres total). Partner objectives are summarized here:

- Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) will enhance 286 acres at six sites on or near the Mississippi River.
- Great River Greening (GRG) will restore / enhance 227 acres of forest habitat across 11 sites throughout the metro area.
- Minnesota Valley Trust (MVT) will protect through fee title acquisition 275 acres of river frontage, floodplain forest, wetland and upland habitat in the Minnesota River Valley, expanding the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. MVT will enhance an additional 444 acres prairie/oak savanna
- The Trust for Public Land (TPL) will protect in fee title 566 acres of priority wildlife habitat and restore / enhance 420 acres of prairie and forest habitat on a variety of sites including the recently-acquired Keystone Woods WMA complex. Prospective acquisitions are prioritized in state, regional, and local natural resource plans.

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

\*Minnesota Land Trust, has elected to not participate in this current proposal. Past results include significant contributions from MLT.



For more information  
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# Metro Big Rivers Habitat Partnership

Phase 16

