



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program - 16  
ML 2027 Request for Funding

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### General Information

**Date:** 06/22/2026

**Proposal Title:** Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program - 16

**Funds Requested:** \$12,138,300

**Confirmed Leverage Funds:** \$117,000

**Is this proposal Scalable?:** Yes

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Jennifer Tonko

**Title:** Executive Director

**Organization:** Executive Director

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### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Goodhue, Waseca, Rice, Steele and Le Sueur.

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

Southeast Forest

Prairie

**Activity types:**

Enhance

Restore

Protect in Fee

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Forest

Wetlands

Prairie

Habitat

**Narrative****Abstract**

The Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program will protect approximately 600 acres in fee; and restore or enhance approximately 471 acres of high-priority wildlife habitat within the Cannon River Watershed, including wetlands, prairies, forests, and river/shallow lake shoreline.

**Design and Scope of Work**

The Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program protects, restores, and enhances publicly accessible, high-quality habitat throughout the Cannon River Watershed (CRW), expanding opportunities for hunting, angling, and outdoor recreation within an hour's drive of more than half of Minnesota's population.

Building on previous Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) investments is central to the program's long-term strategy. The majority of acquisitions that are proposed expand on lands previously protected or restored through this partnership. Rather than pursuing isolated projects, the partnership uses a programmatic approach that identifies opportunities over time to expand wildlife management areas, connect fragmented habitats, and establish larger habitat corridors with multiple ecological and recreational benefits.

Priority parcels are selected based on their ability to provide multiple benefits simultaneously, including habitat protection for wildlife, conservation of threatened and sensitive species, hunting and fishing access, broader outdoor recreation opportunities, water quality improvement, and water storage and climate resilience benefits. Restoration and enhancement projects are selected through a combination of ecological need and the land manager's readiness and capacity to steward the site successfully in the near term.

Located south of the Twin Cities, the 1,460-square-mile CRW includes more than 800 miles of streams and rivers draining a diverse landscape of prairie, oak savanna, wetlands, and Big Woods forest. Today, much of the watershed is dominated by agricultural production and urban development, with agricultural practices and shoreline development contributing to impaired stretches of the Cannon River and associated lakes and streams.

This multi-year, multi-partner program protects and restores targeted parcels that contribute to larger complexes of forests, prairies, wetlands, lakeshore, and river corridor habitat. To date, the program has permanently protected 3,705 acres and restored or enhanced 457 acres utilizing Outdoor Heritage Funds, with an additional 1,036 acres of restoration underway.

The partnership combines complementary expertise to efficiently advance watershed-scale conservation outcomes. Clean River Partners (CRP) serves as the local watershed partner, coordinating the program and leading landowner outreach and program administration. Trust for Public Land (TPL) targets large wetland/upland complexes, rare biomes, shallow lakes, river shoreline, and lands adjacent to existing public land for fee-title acquisition, conveying lands to the DNR or other appropriate public entities. Great River Greening (GRG)

collaborates with DNR, municipal, and USFWS partners to evaluate and implement restoration and enhancement projects through invasive species removal, wetland restoration, and native vegetation establishment.

The partnership's long-term, programmatic approach has created a cascading conservation effect within the watershed: permanent protection of one property often inspires neighboring landowners to pursue conservation opportunities. For example, the partnership utilized ML15 funds to acquire an 18-acre addition to the Warsaw WMA, protecting native dry bedrock prairie and oak savanna. This proposal builds on that investment through the proposed acquisition of an additional 120 acres. Additionally, building on the newly created 200-acre Sungina WMA (funded via ML23/ML24), this proposal seeks to acquire an additional 160 acres.

This proposal will protect approximately 600 acres in fee and restore or enhance approximately 471 acres.

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

The areas targeted by TPL have been identified and prioritized through state, regional, and local natural resource plans due to their high biodiversity qualities and connectivity to existing public lands. Protection will occur through fee title acquisition and will target Big Woods, oak savannas, wetlands, and sensitive shoreline communities within the CRW. GRG will conduct significant habitat restoration and enhancement work on protected conservation lands identified by DNR and local governments within the watershed. The aim is to improve habitat values for wildlife and Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), including birds using the Mississippi River migratory corridor, pollinators, amphibians, and reptiles. Work will restore and enhance riverine, forest, wetland, oak savanna, and prairie habitat at 10 conservation sites.

Protection, restoration and/or enhancement of these significant parcels will provide critical habitat for game species, including upland birds (dove, turkey, pheasant, and woodcock), white-tailed deer, migratory waterfowl (mallard, canvasback, wood duck, hooded merganser, pintail, and lesser scaup), and aquatic species (trout, northern pike, black crappie, bluegill, and walleye). Protection will also provide access to diverse recreational experiences including duck, pheasant, turkey, and deer hunting as well as river, stream, and lake fishing. Nongame wildlife, including SGCN, that also benefit from this effort include: bald eagle, Bell's vireo, cerulean warbler, loggerhead shrike, Sandhill crane, red-headed woodpecker, greater yellowlegs, buffbreasted sandpiper, rusty patched bumble bee, Blanding's turtle, wood turtle, and mudpuppies.

Working alongside the MN DNR and USFWS, our partnership aims to conserve habitat along streams and rivers where SGCN reptile and amphibian species have been located. Enhancing riparian corridors will increase nesting habitats for migrating waterfowl and reptile species. Restoration and conversion of tiled crop fields back to tallgrass prairie potholes will extend vital habitat for grassland bird species, which have seen a 40% decline in population since the 1960's.

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

Conservation opportunities within the watershed are highly time-sensitive. Many proposed acquisitions are only possible because willing landowners, available funding, adjacent public land priorities, and restoration capacity are aligned at this moment. These windows are often short-lived and difficult to recreate once properties change ownership or land use. Prior OHF investments have generated significant conservation momentum: as habitat complexes expand and restoration work becomes visible on the landscape, neighboring landowners increasingly pursue protection opportunities. Maintaining continuity in funding is critical to converting these emerging opportunities into permanent conservation outcomes. Several proposed acquisitions are strategically important

parcels that strengthen existing public lands and habitat corridors, while restoration projects are prioritized based on both ecological significance and partner readiness to ensure high-quality implementation.

**Describe how the proposal expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:**

Southern Minnesota, and specifically the Cannon River Watershed, has a rich agricultural presence due to the fertile soils found throughout the region. Large portions of corn and soybean fields limit forage for pollinators, habitat for migrating waterfowl, and threaten water quality for aquatic species. This partnership aims to protect vulnerable waterways through adjacent land protection, restoration of depleted wetlands and floodplains, conversion of agricultural fields to prairies or forests, along with enhancement of degraded public lands to establish and improve thriving ecosystems.

This program has demonstrated its ability to expand habitat corridors and limit habitat fragmentation, establishing nine new WMAs, one AMA, and expanding 11 WMAs since its inception. The program uses information from the Wildlife Action Network, Minnesota County Biological Survey, and several analysis tools to identify priority lands for protection and restoration, creating and expanding conservation corridors and habitat complexes. In addition, we will consult several landscape-level planning efforts such as the Statewide Wildlife Action Plan, Cannon River Watershed Landscape Stewardship Plan, the Cannon River Watershed - Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS), and the Cannon River Watershed Comprehensive Management Plan.

Heading into Phase 16, our programmatic approach has positioned us for additional opportunities to build on important habitat corridors.

First, the partnership is helping establish an emerging Straight River habitat corridor through coordinated acquisitions, restoration, and enhancement activities that collectively improve habitat quality, protect threatened species, and benefit water quality. Proposed acquisitions at Medford WMA II and Faribault WMA II will expand the amount of connected public land along this corridor, while restoration partnerships with the City of Owatonna at Kaplan Woods Park and Leo Rudolph Nature Reserve will improve adjacent habitat conditions for wildlife and selected SGCN.

Second, the proposal continues long-term investment in the health and expansion of OHF lands. Warsaw WMA was first protected through this program in 2018, which created the foundation for additional acquisition and restoration opportunities currently proposed. Planned restoration will protect and enhance remnant prairie habitat while improving surrounding prairie and forest ecosystems. Additionally, this proposal seeks to expand the habitat on the recently acquired 200-acre Sungina WMA.

**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

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

**Prairie**

Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

## Southeast Forest

Protect, enhance, and restore habitat for fish, game, and nongame wildlife in rivers, cold-water streams, and associated upland habitat

### **Describe how this project/program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife:**

While much of the Cannon River Watershed has been fragmented by agriculture and development, the watershed still contains areas of exceptional biodiversity significance (2014 Cannon River Watershed Landscape Stewardship Plan). The CRW is ecologically distinctive because it sits at the intersection of multiple landscape types, including Big Woods forest, oak savanna, prairie, and the Driftless Area, and contains rare natural features such as goat prairies and calcareous fens.

This program's conservation legacy is strengthened by its cumulative, programmatic approach. Many current projects build directly upon earlier OHF-supported acquisitions and restorations, creating larger and more connected habitat systems over time rather than isolated protected parcels. This phased expansion strategy allows the partnership to respond to emerging opportunities while steadily increasing the habitat strength, ecological function, and public recreational value of the Cannon River Watershed landscape.

This partnership prioritizes the protection, restoration, and expansion of interconnected prairies, oak savannas, wetlands, forests, and riparian habitat corridors that provide long-term ecological and public benefits. Restoration and enhancement activities convert degraded or fragmented lands into higher-quality habitat that benefits SGCN, including monarch butterflies, rusty patched bumblebees, and eastern meadowlarks, while also supporting game species such as deer, pheasants, turkeys, and doves through improved forage, cover, and nesting habitat.

Much of the land that supports this biodiversity has been protected or restored through previous OHF investments. The program also creates lasting public benefits for Minnesotans. According to a spatial driveshed analysis conducted by TPL, more than 3.4 million people live within an hour's drive of lands protected through the Cannon River Watershed program. Lands protected through this effort are open for hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and outdoor recreation, increasing public access to high-quality natural areas in southern Minnesota.

The partnership continues to address fragmentation pressure by strategically expanding public lands and habitat corridors throughout the watershed. Ongoing outreach to landowners and public agencies demonstrates continued interest in permanently protecting and restoring lands with high biological significance. To date, the partnership has permanently protected 3,705 acres and restored or enhanced 457 acres utilizing OHF funds, with strong continued demand for this conservation work.

### **If this project/program does not have permanent outcomes, describe why it is important to undertake at this time:**

N/A; this program does have permanent outcomes.

## Outcomes

### **Programs in prairie region:**

Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ *Core parcels are identified in partnership with the DNR, counties, and the partners of the Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program.*

*Success will be determined based on the acreage of lands protected, restored, and enhanced and the percentage of protected lands in the watershed.*

**Programs in southeast forest region:**

High priority riparian lands, forestlands, and savannas are protected from parcelization and fragmentation ~ Core parcels are identified in partnership with the DNR as well as the partners of the Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program. Success will be determined based on the acreage of lands protected, restored, and enhanced and the percentage of protected lands in the watershed.

**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.**

Funding requested by the Partnership will not supplant or substitute for any previous non-legacy funding used for the same purpose.

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

TPL will convey all fee-title land in this proposal to the DNR for permanent stewardship. Once land has been acquired and conveyed, initial site development and restoration of these lands will begin. Estimated costs for initial restoration or enhancement work are included in this proposal. TPL will work with the DNR to finalize a restoration management plan, and Actual implementation will occur in future years under DNR leadership. These properties will be managed and maintained by the DNR according to their guidelines.

In collaboration with DNR, County, and USFWS personnel, parcels targeted for restoration will be evaluated by GRG to determine existing and desired conditions for each site. Information gathered will be used to develop site-specific scope of work plans for restoring ecologically desired habitats. Project management plans will detail the methods and practices to be used and a timeline for the successful completion of each site/project along with management guidelines and maintenance outline for the future. After funds are expended, sites will be in a condition that the landowner will be able to maintain.

**Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes**

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2028	TPL - OHF & DNR	Post property	Development restoration/management plan for property	-
2029	TPL - DNR	Develop restoration/management plan for property	Restore and steward property for habitat and public recreation	-
2030	TPL - DNR	Restore and steward property for habitat and public recreation	-	-
2028	GRG - OHF	Perform site evaluation and assessment in collaboration with DNR	Develop R/E plan for property. Begin monitoring	Initiate site preparation from R/E work. Continue monitoring
2029	GRG - OHF	Initiate R/E work	Continue R/E depending on appropriate methods and time of year	Continue R/E and begin stewardship as needed using appropriate methods and dependent on time of year

2030	GRG - OHF	Continue R/E and begin stewardship. Target actions to maintain habitat.	Restorative action to correct damage as needed	Evaluate progress and determine if additional actions are needed
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**Provide an assessment of how your program may celebrate cultural diversity or reach diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:**

Protecting, restoring, and enhancing diverse and resilient habitats benefits all Minnesotans. It keeps our air and water cleaner, mitigates the impacts of climate change, and conserves the biological diversity that belongs to everyone. Public land provides an opportunity for recreation and health to those who do not have access to private natural lands, whether that be for hunting, fishing, hiking, or other outdoor pursuits.

This program involves, engages, and benefits BIPOC and other diverse communities through focused events that leverage Outdoor Heritage Funds. For example, recent efforts, funded through other sources, have focused on increasing the engagement of BIPOC and diverse communities across the watershed in volunteer events at sites protected and restored using past OHF appropriations. Additionally, also through different funding sources, some of this program’s recent acquisition and restoration projects focus on protection of the environment and water quality while creating much-needed recreational opportunities targeting disadvantaged areas (based upon housing, income and wastewater thresholds) with significant BIPOC communities.

Our partners actively encourage residents who live near habitat restoration sites and create programs specifically for people from diverse backgrounds, opening up opportunities to pursue environmental careers such as GRG’s Engaging a Diverse Population Program. Another example of this is TPL’s mentored hunting and angling program. In partnership with the MN Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, TPL is hosting and facilitating mentored hunting, angling, and foraging opportunities for diverse communities on public lands and waters across MN with a focus on lands protected with Outdoor Heritage Funds. Our target audience for mentees are diverse and historically marginalized communities, with a particular outreach focus on BIPOC communities. Our program mentors are individuals from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds as well, helping to reinforce and foster a sense of representation, belonging, and inclusion in outdoor spaces.

**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:**

We will follow the County/Township Board notification processes as directed by the current statutory language.

**Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection?**

Yes

**Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program?**

Yes

**Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, Subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 or on lands to be acquired in this program?**

Yes

**Where does the activity take place?**

WMA

SNA

AMA

County/Municipal

State Forests

### 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?**

No

**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:**

NA

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

State of MN

County

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

WMA

SNA

AMA

State Forest

County Forest

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed 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 and when the restoration/enhancement work will be completed and identify the source of funding:**

Initial restoration activities will be conducted by the MN DNR through DNR IDP. TPL will assess the full R/E needs of each parcel protected through this appropriation. If R/E needs exist, funding for those projects will be incorporated into a future proposal.

### **Previous OHF Appropriations**

**Have you received OHF dollars through LSOHC for this program or project in the past?**

Yes

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

Yes

**If needed, please include any explanation of unspent funds.**

A significant portion of the remaining balance is associated with newly awarded ML26 funds. Additional expenditures have also occurred since the most recent status report; the table reflects expenditures as of the end of 2025.

For TPL, remaining unspent funds are dedicated to ongoing personnel and professional service costs necessary to close acquisitions in 2026 and 2027. Approximately \$2.2 million remains for GRG restoration and enhancement work, with the majority of these budgets committed for seed/vegetation purchases and subcontracts, which will occur over multiple growing seasons and implementation phases. Approximately \$300,000 remains for CRP's ongoing program coordination, landowner outreach, and administration activities.

Current expenditures remain aligned with projected implementation timelines, and all remaining funds are expected to be expended within their respective grant periods.

**Open OHF Appropriations - Data from Most Recent Status Update**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Funding Amount Received</b>	<b>Amount Spent to Date</b>	<b>Funding Remaining</b>	<b>% Spent to Date</b>
ML 2026 - Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program - 15	\$2,847,000	-	\$2,847,000	0.0%
ML 2025 - Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program - Phase 14	\$2,663,000	\$1,229,600	\$1,433,400	46.17%
ML 2024 - Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program - Phase 13	\$2,555,000	\$1,971,900	\$583,100	77.18%
ML 2023 - Cannon River Watershed Habitat Restoration and Protection Program - Phase 12	\$2,981,000	\$2,399,000	\$582,000	80.48%
ML 2022 - Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program - Phase 11	\$2,636,000	\$2,114,400	\$521,600	80.21%
ML 2021 - Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program - Phase 10	\$2,623,000	\$2,505,700	\$117,300	95.53%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$16,305,000</b>	<b>\$10,220,600</b>	<b>\$6,084,400</b>	<b>62.68%</b>

**Timeline**

<b>Activity Name</b>	<b>Estimated Completion Date</b>
Finalize restoration and enhancement plans	June 30, 2028
Landowner negotiations, agreements and due diligence	June 30, 2029
Land acquired	June 30, 2031
Initial site development	Fall 2032
Restoration and enhancement	June 30, 2032

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	\$1,038,000	\$2,200	-, Private	\$1,040,200
Contracts	\$3,866,000	-	-	\$3,866,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$6,000,000	-	-	\$6,000,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$39,000	\$3,000	-, Private, Private	\$42,000
Professional Services	\$102,000	-	-	\$102,000
Direct Support Services	\$348,300	\$304,800	Private, Private	\$653,100
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$180,000	-	-	\$180,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$15,000	-	-	\$15,000
Supplies/Materials	\$445,000	-	-	\$445,000
DNR IDP	\$105,000	-	-	\$105,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$12,138,300</b>	<b>\$310,000</b>	-	<b>\$12,448,300</b>

**Partner: Clean River Partners**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$75,000	-	-	\$75,000
Contracts	\$4,000	-	-	\$4,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	\$1,000	Private	\$1,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$20,300	-	-	\$20,300
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$99,300</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	-	<b>\$100,300</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Clean River Partners Staff	0.4	3.0	\$75,000	-	-	\$75,000

**Partner: Great River Greening**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$463,000	\$2,200	Private	\$465,200
Contracts	\$3,762,000	-	-	\$3,762,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$39,000	-	-	\$39,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$213,000	\$189,800	Private	\$402,800
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$15,000	-	-	\$15,000
Supplies/Materials	\$445,000	-	-	\$445,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$4,937,000</b>	<b>\$192,000</b>	-	<b>\$5,129,000</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Restoration Staff	1.1	5.0	\$463,000	\$2,200	Private	\$465,200

**Partner: Trust for Public Land**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$500,000	-	-	\$500,000
Contracts	\$100,000	-	-	\$100,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$6,000,000	-	-	\$6,000,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	\$2,000	Private	\$2,000
Professional Services	\$102,000	-	-	\$102,000
Direct Support Services	\$115,000	\$115,000	Private	\$230,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$180,000	-	-	\$180,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	\$105,000	-	-	\$105,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$7,102,000</b>	<b>\$117,000</b>	-	<b>\$7,219,000</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Project and Legal Staff	0.69	4.0	\$500,000	-	-	\$500,000

**Amount of Request:** \$12,138,300

**Amount of Leverage:** \$310,000

**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 2.55%

**DSS + Personnel:** \$1,386,300

**As a % of the total request:** 11.42%

**Easement Stewardship:** -

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

**Leverage Funding Table**

	Leverage Amount Committed	Leverage Amount Confirmed (of Committed Funds)	Leverage Amount Anticipated	Total Leverage
Amount:	\$307,800	\$117,000	\$2,200	\$310,000
% of Total Leverage:	99.29%	37.74%	0.71%	

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

The partnership provides privately sourced leverage for 47% of DSS and 7% of travel costs. The partnership also seeks various state, local and private funds to acquire property and conduct enhancements/restorations.

**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?**

Since some costs are fixed, a somewhat greater than proportionate reduction in activities and acres would occur. Restoration and enhancement acres and budgets would be reduced in a way that meets the needs of the remaining parcels.

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

Program management costs (personnel, travel, and DSS expenses) will be reduced, but not proportionately, because program coordination and oversight costs remain consistent regardless of appropriation amount. CRP's program administration is consistent regardless of acres protected or restored in order to manage the program and maintain partner and community relationships.

### **If the project received 30% of the requested funding**

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

Since some costs are fixed, a somewhat greater than proportionate reduction in activities and acres would occur. Restoration and enhancement acres and budgets would be reduced in a way that meets the needs of the remaining parcels.

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

Program management costs (personnel, travel, and DSS expenses) will be reduced, but not proportionately because program coordination and oversight costs remain consistent regardless of appropriation amount. CRP's program administration is consistent regardless of acres protected or restored in order to manage the program and maintain partner and community.

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

Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund

Clean Water Fund

### **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 are an estimate of the personnel time required to produce the grant deliverables put forward in this proposal. An array of staff draw from these funds for legal work, negotiating with landowners, crafting of acquisition documents, coordinating with agency partners, working with contractors, restoration and enhancement activities, conducting landowner outreach, and managing the grant. We use only those personnel funds necessary to achieve the goals of the program.

### **Contracts**

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

TPL's contract line includes potential site clean-up and initial restoration activities.

GRG's contract line includes restoration/enhancement contracts by service providers.

Clean River Partners contract line for OHF funds includes accounting service cost for the organization's contracted finance director.

## Professional Services

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

Appraisals

Other : Environmental Site Assessments, Mineral Assessments, Mapping

Surveys

## Fee Acquisition

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

We anticipate we will close 3 to 4 transactions and investigate one other.

## 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?**

Clean River Partners' DSS rate has been approved by the DNR in 2024.

TPL's DSS request is based upon its federal rate which has been approved by the MN DNR and 50% of these costs are requested from the OHF grant while 50% is contributed as privately sourced leverage.

GRG's DSS rate includes the allowable direct and necessary expenditures that are not captured in other line items in the budget, and was approved by the DNR in 2024. A portion not exceeding 50% of these costs are requested from the grant and the balance is contributed as leverage.

## Other Equipment/Tools

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

Hand tools, saws, brush cutters, personal protective equipment, burn equipment, seed collection equipment, repairs 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	15	81	56	0	152
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	600	600
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	129	190	0	319
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>1,071</b>

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

	RESTORE: Lands acquired in this proposal	RESTORE: Lands acquired with previous OHF appropriations (<5yrs old)	RESTORE Total	ENHANCE: Lands acquired in this proposal	ENHANCE: Lands acquired with previous OHF appropriations (<5yrs old)	ENHANCE Total
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	96	96	-	44	44
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>

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

	RESTORE: Lands acquired with OHF	RESTORE: Lands NOT acquired with OHF	ENHANCE: Lands acquired with OHF	ENHANCE: Lands NOT acquired with OHF
DNR Lands (WMA, State Forests, etc.)	134	28	175	44
Non-DNR Lands (city, state, federal, etc.)	-	18	-	72
Easements	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>116</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	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	\$166,500	\$371,700	\$954,800	-	\$1,493,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$7,165,300	\$7,165,300
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	\$501,000	\$2,979,000	-	\$3,480,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$166,500</b>	<b>\$872,700</b>	<b>\$3,933,800</b>	<b>\$7,165,300</b>	<b>\$12,138,300</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	152	0	152
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	600	0	600
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	95	224	0	319
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>976</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,071</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	\$1,493,000	-	\$1,493,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$7,165,300	-	\$7,165,300
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	\$800,000	\$2,680,000	-	\$3,480,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>	<b>\$11,338,300</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$12,138,300</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	\$11,100	\$4,588	\$17,050	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$11,942
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	\$3,883	\$15,678	-

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	\$9,822	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$11,942	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	\$8,421	\$11,964	-

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

1 miles

## Parcels

### Sign-up Criteria?

No

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

Trust for Public Land works with its public partners to identify and prioritize projects that meet their objectives and are on their priority lists. Criteria includes whether the land provides critical habitat for game and non-game species and quality public recreational opportunities, presence of unique plants and animals species (including SGCN), goals of conservation plans, adjacency to other public land or habitat complexes, existence of local support, immediacy of threats, landowner willingness and time frame.

Great River Greening works with land owning entities (public and protected private) and interested stakeholders to identify parcels where there is a need for restoration or enhancement of lands and water resources. Parcels are selected using the following criteria: permanently protected status (WMA, AMA, SNA, Forestry, County Conservation, etc.), ecological and habitat value and potential (biodiversity, size and location), congruence with existing plans and priority areas, willing and committed landowners (demonstrated through leveraged match), and leveraging opportunities.

### Restore / Enhance Parcels

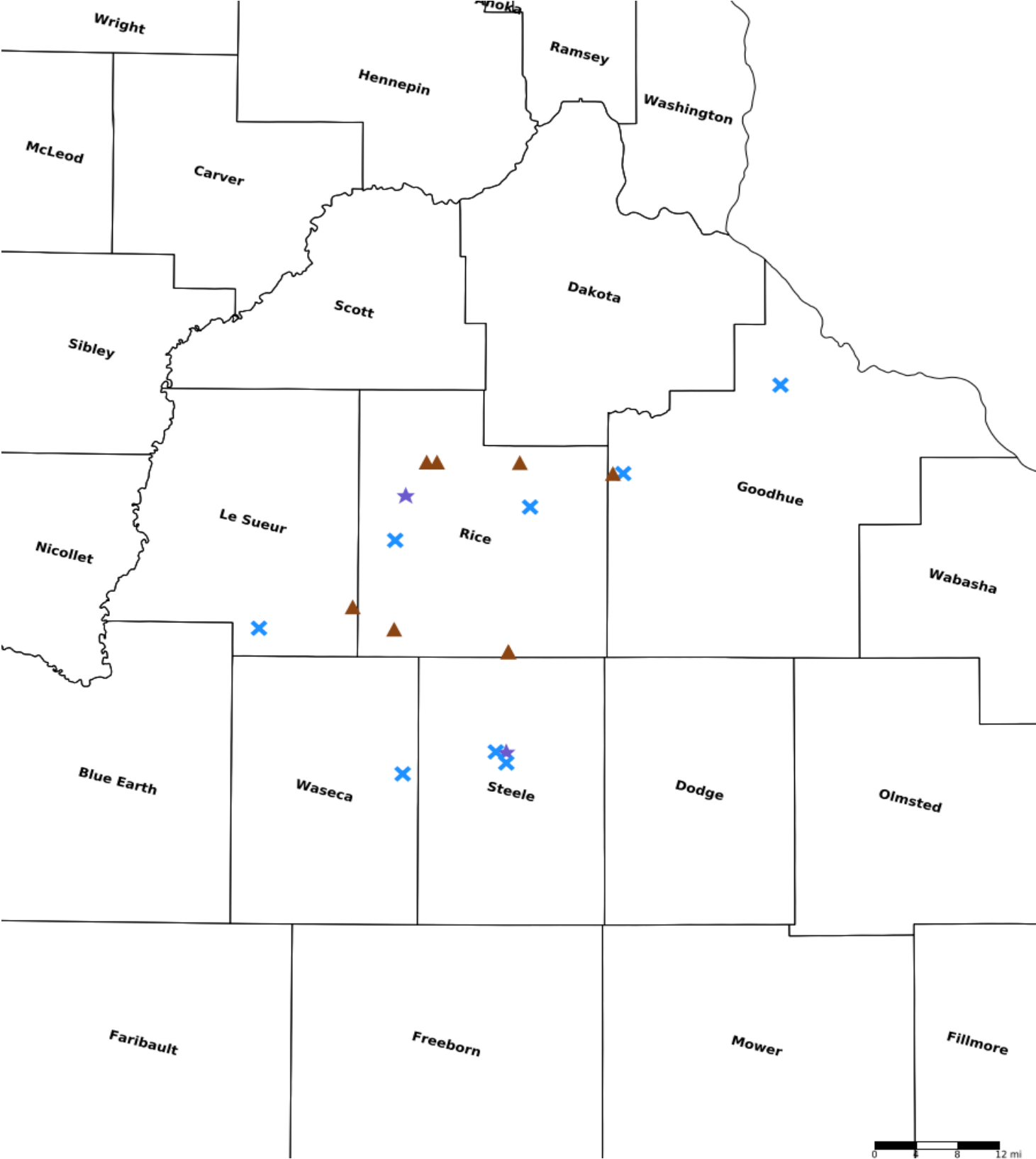
Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
Cannon River - Turtle Preserve SNA	Goodhue	11316235	15	\$200,000	Yes	15 acres of forest enhancement via Invasive woody removal
Warsaw WMA	Goodhue	11118208	120	\$807,000	Yes	Restore 2 acres of remnant prairie, Enhance 94 acres of prairie and 24 acres forest through invasive species management and native seeding.
Dove Lake WMA Phase 2	Le Sueur	10924221	40	\$731,000	Yes	40 acres forest enhancement through removal of invasive red cedar, honeysuckle and buckthorn
Big Woods WMA addition	Rice	11122223	60	\$347,000	Yes	50 acres prairie restoration, 6 acres wetland restoration, and 4 acres prairie enhancement
Boyd Sartell WMA	Rice	11022210	66	\$946,000	Yes	66 acres forest enhancement via invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle removal in mesic hardwood forest
Cannon River Wilderness Area-Phase 2	Rice	11120226	21	\$408,000	Yes	21 acres forest enhancement through woody invasive removal
City of Owatonna - Kaplan Woods Park	Steele	10720217	18	\$428,000	Yes	20 acres of wetland enhancement via woody invasive management and wetland diversity seeding.

City of Owatonna - Leo Rudolph Park	Steele	10720221	40	\$133,000	Yes	30 acres prairie enhancement via biodiversity seeding and 10 acres forest enhancement via invasive woody removal and tree planting
Somerset WMA	Steele	10720216	80	\$739,000	Yes	30 acres crop conversion, 40 woody management, 10 acres Wetland restoration
Blowers Park	Waseca	10722226	11	\$198,000	Yes	3 acres woody invasive management and 8 acres of Oak savanna enhancement

**Protect in Fee Parcels**

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Warsaw WMA	Goodhue	11118207	131	\$900,000	No
Horseshoe Lake WMA	Le Sueur	10923212	127	\$1,200,000	No
Faribault WMA II	Rice	10920233	37	\$185,000	No
Medford WMA II	Rice	10920233	113	\$1,500,000	No
Sakatah WMA Addition	Rice	10922222	62	\$589,000	No
Spring Brook WMA	Rice	11120203	218	\$2,180,000	No
Sungina WMA Addition	Rice	11121206	100	\$710,000	No
Sungina WMA Addition II	Rice	11121205	58	\$599,900	No

Parcel Map



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

# Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program

Establishing a Legacy – Phase 16

## Program Overview

The Cannon River is one of Minnesota’s designated Wild and Scenic Rivers, flowing through a 1,460–square–mile watershed that contains more than 800 miles of streams and rivers. Among its major tributaries is the Straight River, whose headwaters begin as a network of small streams and drainage ditches before growing and joining the Cannon River in Faribault. Although the region was once dominated by forests, prairies, and wetlands, agriculture and urban development have significantly altered the landscape. Today, only 18 percent of the area’s original natural landscape remains.

Protecting and restoring the remaining habitat is essential to supporting biodiversity, strengthening the long–term ecological health of the watershed, and maintaining and improving water quality. Through strategic conservation efforts, this program continues to safeguard critical natural resources while expanding opportunities for public access, hunting and fishing, and community gathering throughout the Cannon River Watershed.

*Our funding request is \$12,138,300 to permanently protect approximately 600 acres and restore or enhance 471 acres.*

## Building on Previous Investments

This program seeks funding to continue to build on previous OHF investments. One focus area is further protecting and restoring the habitat corridor along the Straight River. Through coordinated land acquisition, restoration, and enhancement activities, this partnership will improve habitat connectivity, protect threatened species, and enhance water quality throughout the region.

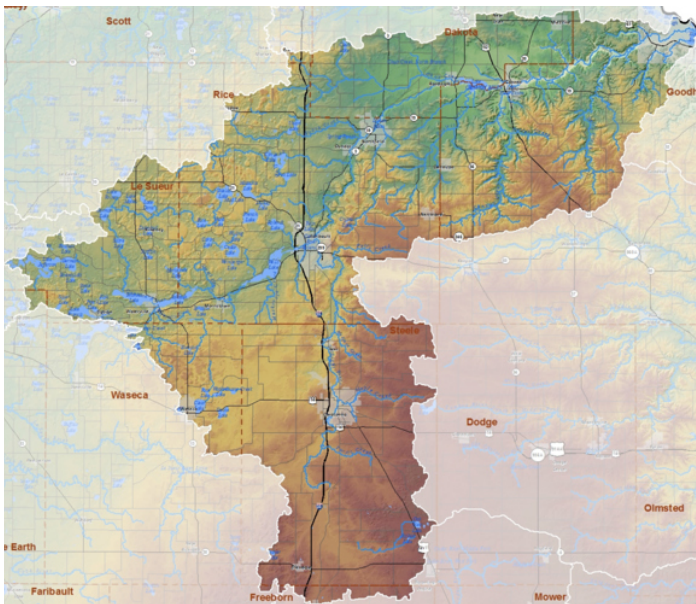
Proposed acquisition opportunities near the Faribault WMA: Medford Unit will protect and expand public lands along this corridor. Restoration partnerships with the City of Owatonna at Kaplan Woods and Leo Rudolph Nature Center will further improve adjacent habitat conditions for wildlife and selected Species in Greatest Conservation Need.



## Straight River Corridor

STEELE COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Map 18, 2016. Copyright © Trust for Public Land. Trust for Public Land and Trust for Public Land logo are federally registered marks of Trust for Public Land. Information on this map is provided for purposes of discussion and visualization only. [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org)



## Accomplishments

To date, we've achieved significant conservation milestones across the Cannon River Watershed.

- Nine new Wildlife Management Areas have been created, and eleven existing Wildlife Management Areas have been expanded.
- One new Aquatic Management Area has been established; the Little Cannon AMA.
- A total of 3,705 acres of land and 10.5 miles of shoreline have been permanently protected and are now publicly accessible.
- Additionally, 457 acres of habitat have been restored or enhanced, with restoration work currently underway on another 1,036 acres.

These accomplishments reflect the strength of the partnership and the long-term commitment to protecting and restoring critical habitat within the watershed.

*Top: Map of the Cannon River Watershed; Bottom: Planting at Sakatah WMA: In-Yan Bo-Sda-Ta Wa-Kpa Unit*

## Our Partnership

Clean River Partners administers and coordinates the program while conducting outreach to landowners throughout the watershed.

Trust for Public Land specializes in land acquisition and managing complex real estate transactions that support long-term conservation goals.

Great River Greening leads restoration activities and engages local volunteers and community members in habitat improvement efforts.

Together, we bring complementary expertise in conservation, restoration, land protection, and community engagement to ensure the long-term success of the program.



## For More Information, Contact:

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