

HA11 - Metro Big Rivers

Metro Big Rivers (MBR) Phase 12 will protect, restore and enhance 3,052 acres of wildlife habitat in the Metropolitan Urbanizing Area, with an emphasis on the Mississippi, Minnesota and St. Croix Rivers and their tributaries.

Metro Big Rivers is a proven, trusted partnership that gets results with Outdoor Heritage Funds for the LSOHC. MBR expands, connects and improves conservation lands in the metro area, creating critical habitat for wildlife and species in greatest need of conservation. MBR builds our conservation culture and creates opportunities for Twin Cities residents to connect with nature and wildlife near where they live.

Metro Big Rivers Phase 12 - 3,052 acres
Protect 1,819 acres • Restore / Enhance 1,233 acres

Outdoor Heritage Fund Request - \$13,822,400
Anticipated Leverage - \$2,169,000 (16%)

Metro Big Rivers exceeds goals and leverages OHF funds.

Results to-date:

- 7,139 acres completed + 2,100 acres in progress.
- Goals exceeded to-date by 115%.
- Significant leverage to-date of \$11.2 million (59% of OHF grant funds and 157% of leverage goal).

Why invest OHF funds in the Metro Urbanizing Area:

- Protect critical habitat and improve degraded habitat along and near the migratory flyways and tributaries in the metro area.
- Protect significant habitat in the metro area from development.
- Improve habitat to benefit species of greatest conservation need.
- Ensure all Twin Cities metro residents have meaningful opportunities to connect with nature near where they live.
- Introduce new residents and youth to nature-based activities like hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, hiking and paddling. Build a conservation ethic.

Why trust and invest in Metro Big Rivers Phase 12:

- MBR achieves the LSOHC's goals in the Metropolitan Urbanizing Area.
- MBR aggressively leverages OHF funds -- \$11.2 million to-date (59% of grant funds spent). We exceeded our leverage goal 157% in completed phases.
- By July 2022, MBR will have completed Phases 1-7, be almost done with Phases 8-9 and be well into Phases 10-11.
- MBR has spent \$20.5 million and committed \$8.3 million in OHF grants to-date. We have \$5.9 million left in current grants, including the grant that just started July 1.

Metro Big Rivers partners with public partners and landowners committed to conservation to achieve the priorities of the LSOHC for Outdoor Heritage Funds in the Metro Urbanizing Area.



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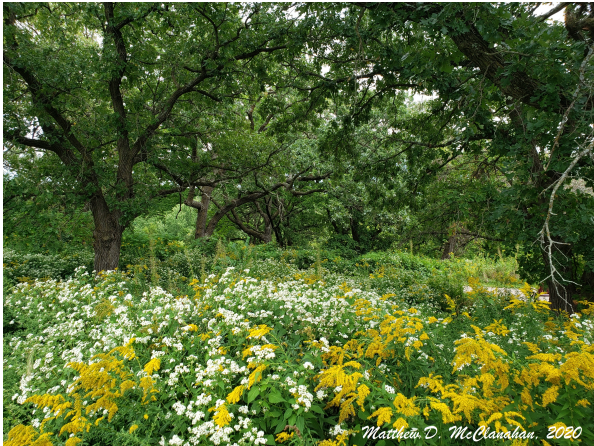


Metro Big Rivers Selected Accomplishments

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) acquired 335 acres for the William H. Houlton Conservation Area at the confluence of the Mississippi and Elk Rivers in Anoka County with OHF grants through Metro Big Rivers Phases 2 and 3 (ML2011 & 2012).

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) is restoring and enhancing the site's forest and prairie habitats through MBR 6, 8 and 9 (ML2015, 2018 and 2019). In the floodplain forest, FMR and volunteers have removed invasive species, applied herbicide and seeded with native vegetation. The 180-acre agricultural field is being restored to prairie.

Partners include the City of Elk River, Friends of the WHHCA and Elk River High School. Research is evaluating restoration techniques and how well wildlife is returning to the site.



The Minnesota Valley Trust (MVT) acquired 196 acres in Carver County for the Rapids Lake and San Francisco Units of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge through four OHF grants - MBR Phases 5, 6, 7 & 8 (ML2014, 2015, 2016 & 2018). All four sites were within the USFWS approved boundary for the refuge, but would have become residential developments without the OHF grant support.

With the balance of the MBR 7 grant and two Conservation Partners Legacy Grants, MVT is restoring the rare oak savannas and converting the agricultural fields to prairie and wetland.

Great River Greening restored the Trout Brook Nature Sanctuary, a 42-acre site protected by the City of St. Paul west of I-35E. The neighborhood once overlooked the Trout Brook Valley, but with industrial development, the creek was filled and put underground in the storm sewer. With that, the neighborhood lost its connection to the natural environment.

With MBR Phases 4 and 5, along with other funds, FMR has daylighted Trout Brook, restored riparian areas and restored the 37-acre railroad yard to pre-settlement ecosystems, including prairie and savanna. Volunteers were engaged in the restoration efforts and local schools and youth programs now use the site as an outdoor classroom.



The Minnesota Land Trust acquired a permanent conservation easement on 46 acres with OHF funds and Washington County Land & Water Legacy program funds. The site's rolling grasslands and forested bluffs slope to the wetlands and meandering stream of Silver Creek, which flows to the St. Croix River. One of the last remaining large parcels in the county's Silver-Twin Lakes high priority conservation area, the property's undeveloped shoreline and natural habitat help protect rare and threatened species including the critically imperiled butternut tree and freshwater mussels. The property contains former agricultural fields that MLT is restoring to prairie and oak savanna with OHF funds and in partnership with the landowner, Washington Conservation District and Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District.