

## **2007 Project Abstract**

For the Period Ending June 30, 2009

**PROJECT TITLE:** Metro Conservation Corridors (MeCC) Phase III: Metro Greenways

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Marybeth Block (Sharon Pfeifer 06/07 through 12/07)

**AFFILIATION:** MN Dept of Natural Resources - Central Regional Operations

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**FUNDING SOURCE:** Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

**LEGAL CITATION:** ML 2007, [Chap. 30], Sec.[2], Subd.4c.

**APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$944,000**

### **Overall Project Outcome and Results:**

The DNR Metro Greenways mission is to *protect, connect and restore* a regional network of natural areas in the growth corridor of the state. This mission is accomplished by supporting local conservation efforts with matching grants, while insuring each individual effort contributes to the regional network concept. During Phase 3 of this program:

Two projects received a total of \$30,870 to implement restoration activities on 11 acres of public land and the project sponsors matched those dollars with \$100,000. At the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary in St. Paul neighborhood groups worked with volunteers and the City of St. Paul to remove invasive plant and plant oak woodland and prairie on the bluffs. The city of Elk River removed invasive species and planted a prairie/savanna in an old pasture that was acquired in 2005 to expand Top of the World City Park.

Five projects received a total of \$1,029,349 that, when combined with over \$3 million dollars from other funding partners, protected 248 acres of open space and high-value ecological areas. Three projects acquired conservation easements to protect: 44 acres along the Vermillion River in Dakota County, 12 acres in the St. Croix Basin's Valley Branch watershed, and 140 acres in Isanti County. The program assisted two local governments to purchase land: the City of Mendota Heights acquired 15 acres at the Pilot Knob Natural Area and Scott County acquired 41 acres that will become part of the future planned 900+ acre Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park.

Six projects received Community Assistance grants to develop tools and policies that local governments will use to protect high quality natural areas. Three of the projects conducted natural resource inventories using the MN Land Cover Classification System. One project developed a model to predict a parcel's sensitivity to development. One project drafted a conservation ordinance. One project developed a Stewardship Guide to provide crucial information to a county wanting to develop a sound conservation easement program.

### **Project Results Use and Dissemination**

Press releases were sent to local newspapers where projects were funded. The DNR intends to post Community Assistance Project Profiles on their website and restoration and protection project information will be available through the public map generated from the MeCC database. All DNR Metro Greenways-generated news releases cited the required MN Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund attribution language.

# Trust Fund 2007 Work Program Final Report

**Date of Report:** September 14, 2009

**Date of Next Status Report:** Trust Fund 2007 Work Program Final Report

**Date of Work program Approval:** 6/5/2007

**Project Completion Date:** 6/30/09

**I. PROJECT TITLE:** Metro Conservation Corridors (MeCC) Phase III: Metro Greenways

**Project Manager:** Marybeth Block (Sharon Pfeifer 06/07 through 12/07)

**Affiliation:** MN Dept of Natural Resources - Central Regional Operations

**Mailing Address:** 1200 Warner Road

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**Web Page address:** <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/greenways/index.html>

**Location:** Within mapped Focus Area in the counties of Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Goodhue, Hennepin, Isanti, LeSueur, Nicollet, Ramsey, Rice, Scott, Sherburne, Sibley, Washington and Wright. See Figure 1.

## **Total Trust Fund Project Budget:**

<b>Trust Fund Appropriation:</b>	<b>\$ 944,000</b>
<b>Minus Amount Expended:</b>	<b>\$ 936,342</b>
<b>Balance:</b>	<b>\$ 7,658</b>

**Legal Citation:** ML 2007, [Chap. 30], Sec.[2], Subd.4c.

**Appropriation Language:** (c) Metro Conservation Corridors- Phase III \$2,500,000 is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements with The Trust for Public Land; Friends of the Mississippi River; Great River Greening; Minnesota Land Trust; Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.; Trout Unlimited; and Friends of the Minnesota Valley for the purposes of planning, restoring, and protecting important natural areas in the metropolitan region, as defined by Minnesota Statutes, section 473.121, subdivision 2, and portions of the surrounding counties, through grants, contracted services, conservation easements, and fee acquisition. Land acquired with this appropriation must be sufficiently improved to meet at least minimum management standards as determined by the commissioner. Expenditures are limited to the identified project corridor areas as defined in the work program. This appropriation may not be used for the purchase of residential structures, unless expressly approved in the work program. All conservation easements must be perpetual and have a natural resource management plan. Any land acquired in fee title by the commissioner of natural resources with money from this appropriation must be designated:(1) as an outdoor recreation unit under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.07; or (2) as provided in Minnesota Statutes, sections 89.018, subdivision 2, paragraph (a); 97A.101; 97A.125; 97C.001; and 97C.011. The commissioner may similarly designate any lands acquired in less than fee title.

## **II. and III. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The DNR Metro Greenways mission is to **protect, connect and restore** a regional network of natural areas in the growth corridor of the state. This mission is accomplished by supporting local conservation efforts with matching grants, while insuring each individual effort contributes to the regional network concept. During Phase 3 of this program:

Two projects received \$30,870 to implement restoration activities on 11 acres public land and the project sponsors matched those dollars with \$100,000. At the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary in St. Paul neighborhood groups worked with volunteers and the City to remove invasive plant and plant oak woodland

and prairie on the bluffs. Elk River removed invasive species and planted a prairie/savanna in an old pasture that was acquired in 2005 to expand Top of the World City Park.

Five projects received \$1,029,349 that, when combined with over \$3 million dollars from other funding partners, protected 248 acres of open space and high-value ecological areas. Three conservation easements acquired 44 acres along the Vermillion River in Dakota County, 12 acres in the St. Croix Basin's Valley Branch watershed and 140 acres in Isanti County. The program assisted two local governments to purchase land: 15 acres at the Pilot Knob Natural Area in Mendota Heights and 41 acres that will become part of a future 900+ acre regional park.

Six project received Community Assistance grants to develop tools and policies that local governments will use to protect high quality natural areas. Three of the projects conducted a natural resource inventories using the MN Land Cover Classification System. One developed a model predict a parcel's sensitivity to development and another drafted a conservation ordinance. A Stewardship Guide was written to provide crucial information to a county wanting to develop a sound conservation easement program.

#### IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

**Result 1 (restoration):** The original project proposal stated a goal of treating 45 acres with restoration practices with over \$44,000 budgeted for grants. The request for proposal process yielded 2 projects applications to carry out restoration activities on 11 acres.

In April of 2008 the LCCMR approved an amendment to transfer the balance of \$13,885 from this result to result 2 (protection). In February of 2009 the work program was again amended to transfer the remaining balance of \$2,413 in result 2 (protection) was back to result 1 to increase the grant to the City of Elk River so they could carry out all of the restoration activities they had planned.

The East Side Neighborhood Development Association was awarded a \$20,000 grant to continue carrying out restoration activities at the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary at St. Paul, MN. This site, once sacred to the Dakota, was contaminated with asbestos when owned by the BNSF Railroad. The Metro Greenways program assisted the City of St. Paul to purchase the property by acquiring a conservation easement on this parcel in 2002 (with bonding funds.) After extensive clean up of the site, Metro Greenways awarded a \$50,000 grant (appropriated from Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund funds "Trust Funds") in 2005 to begin landscape restoration activities at the Nature Center. The activities carried out with money awarded under this work program include:

- Removed 11 invasive species from 1.75 acres: Canada Thistle, Burdock, Spotted Knapweed, Buckthorn, Garlic Mustard, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Artemisia, Canada Goldenrod, biennial Thistle, Curly dock and Reed Canary Grass.
  - Conducted a prescribed burn.
  - In April, 2008, 300 volunteers planted, caged and mulched 700 oaks woodland trees and shrubs on 1.5 acres. This site was selected for HGTVs "Change the World Week."
  - In April of 2009 the City of St. Paul and Lower Phalen Creek Group planted, caged and mulched 220 oaks woodland trees and shrubs on .75 acres.
- \*note: the City of St. Paul has been watering the trees during drought conditions.
- 7 warm season native grass species and 7 native forbs species where planted on the bluff.

The oak woodland tree and shrub plantings are doing well with the extra steps taken to establish them. Establishing the native species on the bluff is challenging due to the steep slopes, poor quality soil and invasive species.

The total cost of the project was \$97,254 up substantially from the original budget amount of \$50,500. The match of \$77,711 was provided by various entities (refer to the chart on the next page.)

The City of Elk River carried out restoration activities on 7 acres at the Top of the World Park Addition. This project was carried out on land acquired in Phase 3 (2005) in part with Trust Funds through a Metro Greenways Grant. This restoration project, carried out with Phase 4 (2007) Trust Fund money, focused on native prairie/savanna restoration activities:

- Site preparation
- Treatment to remove & control invasive trees and shrubs: cut and treat the stumps.
- Selectively cut small oaks that occurred under the canopy of healthy, more mature oaks.
- Conducted a prescribed burn
- Seeded the prairie and savanna area

This project included a collaborative approach with the City of Elk River parks staff, volunteers, and a private contractor (Bonestroo). This team worked well together and was able to successfully complete a number of site preparation activities in close sequence, thanks to good communication. With the economic downturn the city experienced some budgetary challenges during the course of this project that required some adjustment in the work plan for this grant project. The MN DNR staff worked with the city and the contractor to make appropriate adjustments to the work plan and schedule, allowing this project to be successfully completed. The City has (and will continue to) spot mow and apply herbicide as needed to establish the seeding. The City is also responsible for installing an interpretive sign.

**Summary Budget Information for Result 2:**

Grant Recipient	Project Name	Deliverable	Acres	Total Cost	Metro Greenways \$	Other Funds \$
Eastside Neighborhood	Bruce Vento Nature Center	Continued restoration of this urban site that was severely degraded when purchased from Burlington Northern Railroad in 2002.	4	\$97,254	\$19,543	McNeely Foundation: \$13,000; McKnight Foundation: 2,000; HGTV funds: 6,405 St. Paul: \$15,945; St. Paul & East Side Youth Conserv Corps & HGTV Volunteers \$40,361
Elk River	Top of the World Savanna	Invasive control, prairie/savanna restoration activities and signage. .	7	\$22,664	\$11,327	City in-kind/cash match: ~\$11,000
			11	\$119,908	30,870	

**Deliverable** \_\_\_\_\_ **Completion Date** \_\_\_\_\_

1. 11 acres treated with restoration efforts 6/30/2009

Original Budget: \$44,000  
 Amended Budget: \$32,528  
Amount Expended: \$30,870  
**Balance: \$ 1,658**

**Result 2 (acquisition):** The Metro Greenways Advisory Committee recommended 7 projects, but one withdrew and two were funding with bonding dollars. Five projects protecting 248 acres were funded with trust fund dollars.

- 3 projects protect 194 acres by acquiring a conservation easement on privately owned land. The Minnesota Land Trust holds easements on 2 properties (12 acres in Washington County and 140 acres in Isanti County.) Dakota County holds one conservation easement on 44 acres (and along 1,310 linear feet of the Vermillion River) near Hastings.
- 2 projects protect 52 acres by acquiring land that will be owned by local units of government and protected by deed restrictions. The City of Mendota Heights expanded the Pilot Knob Natural Area by 15 acres. Scott County purchased a parcel that, in the future, will be part of a regional park.

Grantee	Project Name	Location	Deliverable	Acres	Total Cost	Metro Greenway Grant	Other Funds \$
<b>Result 2: Acquire Significant Habitat</b>							
Dakota County	Wilmar	Dakota County, Vermillion Township	<b>The County acquired a conservation easement</b> from the landowner. The protected area includes cropland, floodplain trees and other vegetation that straddles 1,310 linear feet Vermillion River.	44	\$225,000	\$40,000	Dakota County FNAP
Mendota Heights	Pilot Knob, Phase II	Dakota County, Mendota Heights	<b>The City acquired</b> a parcel that abuts Pilot Knob parcel acquired in 2005. The MG grant included 2 appropriations: 72% acquired from Phase 3 funds and 28% from Phase 2 funds (acreage has been prorated by the % paid in this phase.)	11	\$1,689,911	\$144,513	City \$400K; Dak. Co. \$400K; DNR \$1.2 M; TPL-ETF \$200K
MN Land Trust	Beckman Farm	Isanti County, Stanchfield Township	<b>MLT acquired a Conservation easement</b> from the landowner. The protected area includes restored cropland including a 40 acre wetland, 40 acre mature red/white pine forest, and 800 feet of shoreline.	140	\$475,000	\$315,000	none
MN Land Trust	Steltzner	Washington County, Afton	<b>MLT acquired a Conservation easement</b> from the landowner. This project was originally submitted by Washington Co. but MLT took over because the landowner is an employee of the County. The protected area is largely oak woodland-brushland. Valley Creek flows by property and it abuts Belwin.	12	\$150,000	\$75,000	landowner donation
Scott County	St. Catherine's Bluff	Scott County, Cedar Lake Township	<b>The County acquired</b> land comprised of a high-quality bluff-top maple-basswood forest (25 acres) and 3500' of undisturbed shoreline. The parcel will be part of the planned Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park, which will encompass about 900 acres. The MG grant included 2 appropriations - 85% acquired with Phase 3 and 15% with Phase 4 Metro Greenways funds. (acreage has been prorated by the % paid in this phase.)	41	\$1,210K	\$236,959	\$41,740 from Metro Greenways Phase 3, \$769,680 from Met Council and \$170,044 from ENT fund
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>248</b>	<b>\$3,812K</b>	<b>\$811,472</b>	

**Deliverable**

1. 256 acres acquired

**Completion Date**

6/30/2009

Original Budget: \$800,000

Amended Budget: \$811,472

Amount Expended: \$811,472

**Balance: \$ 0**

### Result 3: Community Conservation Assistance

Four cities and two counties within the metropolitan area were awarded Community Conservation Assistance matching grants. The purpose of this grant is to assist local governments with gathering and integrating natural resources information into local development and conservation planning and policy decisions. The DNR is especially interested in projects that seek to resolve challenges associated with the conservation of remaining natural habitats in rapidly changing communities.

#### Final Report Project Summary:

Grant Recipient	Project Type	Deliverable	Area	Total Cost \$	Metro Greenway \$	Other Funds
<b>Result 3: Provide Community Conservation Assistance</b>						
Andover	Natural Resource Inventory (Targeted)	NRI/MLCCS to identify natural and semi-natural areas and assess the overall quality to aid staff and commission members efforts to protect, restore and encourage private land stewardship.	740 acres	\$14,000	\$9,476	City
Dayton	Ordinances	Developed a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance aimed at protection of natural resources within the designated Greenway Corridor.	Greenway	\$35,000	\$10,000	City
Goodhue County	Policy & Planning	Developed a GIS model that combines data and assigns a numerical score to a parcel indicating the quantity and quality of natural resources, and other relevant characteristics of the property.	entire county	\$70,000	\$35,000	County
Maplewood	Natural Resource Inventory (Targeted)	NRI/MLCCS to 1) Develop a Greenways policy statement and 2) Develop a conservation-based zoning district	Greenway	\$40,000	\$10,000	City
Monticello	Natural Resource Inventory (Targeted)	NRI/MLCCS to identify high quality natural resources based on scientific review and concurrent process where the public identified priority natural resource areas. Protection strategies were also identified.	10,000 acres	\$30,000	\$9,984	City
Scott	Policy & Planning	Developed a Stewardship Guide to provide crucial information specific to land management for the purpose of informing the decisions and process Scott County is undertaking to develop a sound conservation easement program.	entire county	\$66,000	\$19,540	Co. Parks & Trails McKnight Scott WMO
				\$165,206	\$94,000	

**Deliverable:** Local land protection tools, policies and inventories.

**Completion Date**

**06/30/2009**

#### Summary Budget Information for Result 3:

Original Budget:	\$ 100,000
Amount Expended:	\$ 94,000
Balance:	\$ 6,000

**TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET:**

**Staff or Contract Services:** \$0

**Equipment:**\$0

**Development:** \$ 0

**Restoration:** \$ \$30,870 for restoration activities on 11 acres

**Acquisition, including easements:** \$ 811,472 protected 248 acres

**Community Assistance:** \$94,000 for 6 projects developing tools to assist local governments in managing and protecting natural resources.

**TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET:** \$ 936,342

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$3,500:** N/A

**V. OTHER FUNDS & PARTNERS:**

**A. Project Partners:** Metro Conservation Corridor partners (see Table A) and private landowners, local governments, regional, state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations and citizen groups.

**B. Other Funds Spent during the Project Period:** \$3,161,154

**C. Past Spending:** In the past 8 years, Metro Greenways has received the following direct appropriations: 1998 bonding: \$4,000,000, 2000 Bonding: \$1,500,000, 2001 LCMR: \$2,730,000 2003 LCMR/Phase1 MWC: \$1,089,000 appropriation, 2005 LCMR/Phase2 MWC: \$1,200,000. In addition, since inception of the program, over \$3 of non-state funds for every LCMR dollar has been directly leveraged towards the projects funded by Metro Greenways.

**D. Time:** 2 years

**VI. DISSEMINATION:** Metro Corridors will periodically distribute information about the program through the widely broadcasted emails to people on the Embrace Open Space (EOS) database, through the EOS quarterly meetings and jointly held county meetings, and on the MeCC website. As projects are completed, the partners involved will publicize accomplishments through press releases and organization newsletters and websites.

**VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:** Periodic work program progress reports will be submitted not later than February 1st and August 1<sup>st</sup> each year, starting with February 1, 2008. A final work program report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 1, 2009 as requested by the LCCMR.

Attachment A: Final Budget Detail 2007 (Phase 3) MeCC- DNR Metro Greenways											
Project Title: Metro Greenways (Results 1,2 and 3)											
Project Manager Name: Marybeth Block											
Trust Fund Appropriation: \$ 944,000											
2007 Trust Fund Budget	Result 1 Budget: Restoration	Amount Spent	Balance	Result 2 Budget: Protection	Amount Spent	Balance	Result 3 Budget: CCA	Amount Spent	Balance	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM											
Grants to LGUs and NGOs	32,528	\$ 30,870	\$ 1,658	\$ 811,472	\$811,472	0	\$100,000	94,000.00	\$6,000	\$944,000	7,658
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 32,528</b>	<b>\$ 30,870</b>	<b>\$ 1,658</b>	<b>\$ 811,472</b>	<b>\$811,472</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$94,000</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$ 944,000</b>	<b>\$7,658</b>