

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2011-2012 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Subd: 04i2.3

Project Title: 2.3 - MeCC 6 - Restoring Our Lands and Waters

Category: D. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Total Project Budget: \$ 400,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 yrs, July 2011 - June 2014

Other Non-State Funds (secured): \$ 120,000

Summary:

We will restore important natural communities through continued engagement in the Anoka Sandplain, St. Croix Healthy Waters Campaign, collar counties, and urban core; and Wild & Scenic Rivers.

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Sponsoring Organization: Great River Greening

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Location:

Region: Metro

Ecological Section: Western Superior Uplands (212K), Paleozoic Plateau (222L), Minnesota and NE Iowa Morainal (222M)

County Name: Anoka, Chisago, Dakota, Goodhue, Hennepin, Isanti, Ramsey, Scott, Washington

City / Township:

2011-2012 MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: MeCC6-2.3: Restoring our Lands and Waters

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Much of the remaining natural habitat within the Greater Twin Cities metropolitan area is threatened by conversion, fragmentation, invasive species, development, altered hydrology, and climate change. Restoration and management of these habitats is needed to save Minnesota's natural heritage for future generations, protect rare and declining species, protect our clean water, reconnect habitat corridors, and serve as an avenue to connect residents with their local environment. In the end, long-term support for natural areas and their ongoing protection and management among community members will be the only way to safeguard these treasures through time. Great River Greening's efforts to build that connection through community volunteer events will play a key role in building that link.

Great River Greening will work with an array of local, state, and federal government agencies, non-profit organizations and individuals – as part of the Metro Conservation Corridors Partnership – to undertake a diverse array of restoration projects that serve to meet **our project goals** of: 1) reducing habitat fragmentation, 2) enhancing habitat quality, 3) reconnecting habitat corridors, and 4) building connections with local communities. **Our objectives** through this grant are to: 1) restore 121 acres of upland habitat, plus an additional 146 acres using leveraged non-state funds, 2) restore 0.18 mile of shoreland habitat, plus an additional 0.14 mile using leveraged non-state funds, and 3) engage 450 volunteers. We have identified 10 important restoration projects – based on criteria of ecological significance, partner commitment, opportunity, and community importance – that are poised for action during the grant timeline. These specific projects are identified below, and are exemplary of our continued engagement in the Anoka Sandplain, St. Croix Healthy Waters Campaign, collar counties, urban core, and State Wild & Scenic Rivers within the mapped Metro Corridors.

Private lands will be required to have a permanent conservation/scenic easement in effect. Species lists will be based on DNR, DNR/Great River Greening, and USDA Plants Database lists, following local ecotype guidelines. In instances when leveraged match funds exceed our goal, Greening prefers to reinvest, to a level that is justified, in the original project area to augment, improve, and accelerate the restoration of those acres, before enlarging the project boundary to begin restoration of additional acres.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Restoration of Upland Habitats within Corridors

Budget: \$ 270,000

We will restore 121 acres, plus an additional 146 acres using leveraged non-state funds (267 total acres) of upland habitat (forests, woodlands, savanna and prairie) through control of invasive species, seeding/planting, prescribed fire, establishment mowing, direct hardwood seeding, and associated activities. Project success will be evaluated by project partners and follow-up activities will be designed to address on-going management needs as they emerge. Restoration plans will be developed for project sites per Trust Fund specifications.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. South Washington Corridor Prairie Restoration Phase II (17ac)	June 2013
2. Battle Creek Regional Park NW Bluffs Savanna Restoration (29 ac)	June 2013
3. Pilot Knob Phase II Establishment and Defragmentation (8 ac)	June 2013
4. DNR Wild & Scenic River (WSR) Easement Restoration: Rum, Cannon, and St. Croix (38 ac)	June 2013
5. Minn Land Trust Rum River Easement Restoration (15 ac)	June 2013
6. NPS St. Croix Wild & Scenic River Easement Restoration (5 ac)	June 2013
7. Pond Dakota Mission Understory Establishment (3 ac)	June 2013
8. Spot Maintenance/Enhancement, Upgrades and Monitoring of 26 existing MeCC projects (10K maximum) (10 ac)	June 2013

Note: *Project-specific* Trust Fund acreages (shown in parentheses) are estimates only and may vary in order to attain the overall goal of 121 acres.

Activity 2: Restoration of Wetland/Shoreland Habitat within Corridors

Budget: \$ 130,000

We will restore 2 acres of wetland habitat and 0.18 mile of shoreline, plus an additional 1 ac and 0.14 mile using leveraged non-state funds (3 ac and 0.32 mile total), through control of invasive species, seeding/planting, and associated activities. Project success will be evaluated by project partners and follow-up activities will be designed to address on-going management needs as they emerge. Restoration plans will be developed for project sites per Trust Fund specifications.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park Shoreland Restoration (0.113 mi)	June 2013
2. Heritage Village Park Wetland & Shoreland Restoration (0.063 mi; 2ac)	June 2013

Note: *Project-specific* Trust Fund acreages and shoreline miles (shown in parentheses) are estimates only, and may vary in order to attain the overall goal of 2 ac and 0.18 mile.

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Project partners will include: South Washington Watershed District; City of Inver Grove Heights; Scott County Parks; Scott Watershed Management Organization; Minnesota DNR Wild & Scenic Rivers Program; Minnesota Land Trust; City of Mendota Heights; National Park Service; Ramsey County Parks.

Great River Greening's professional field crew – led by experienced, trained, and licensed personnel – will be undertaking much of this proposed work. Contracts, when needed, will be awarded on a competitive, experience, and performance basis; licensed if required.

B. Timeline Requirements

All projects will require at least a full field season for implementation and follow-up maintenance to ensure restoration activities are a success. Several projects – specifically oak savanna and prairie restorations – will benefit from a full two years of restoration activities, including establishment mowing, invasive species control, and other follow-up activities. Many of these projects will require a modest amount of follow-up establishment and other management action beyond the timeframe of this grant. As appropriate, we envision including a portion (<15K) of the funding needs in a MeCC VII proposal for FY 2014-2015.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

The need and opportunities for restoration in project areas will continue into the foreseeable future, especially in light of climate change, increasing development pressures, and other threats. Great River Greening – as a non-profit conservation organization – is committed to working with our partners into the future to identify financial resources to manage their lands where these investments have been placed. While landowner partners must agree to manage their lands over the long term, where appropriate, and where the need exists, we envision approaching ENRTF to be *one of several* funding streams to that end. ENRTF funding helps to ensure that we actively guide the long term adaptive management of the site.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

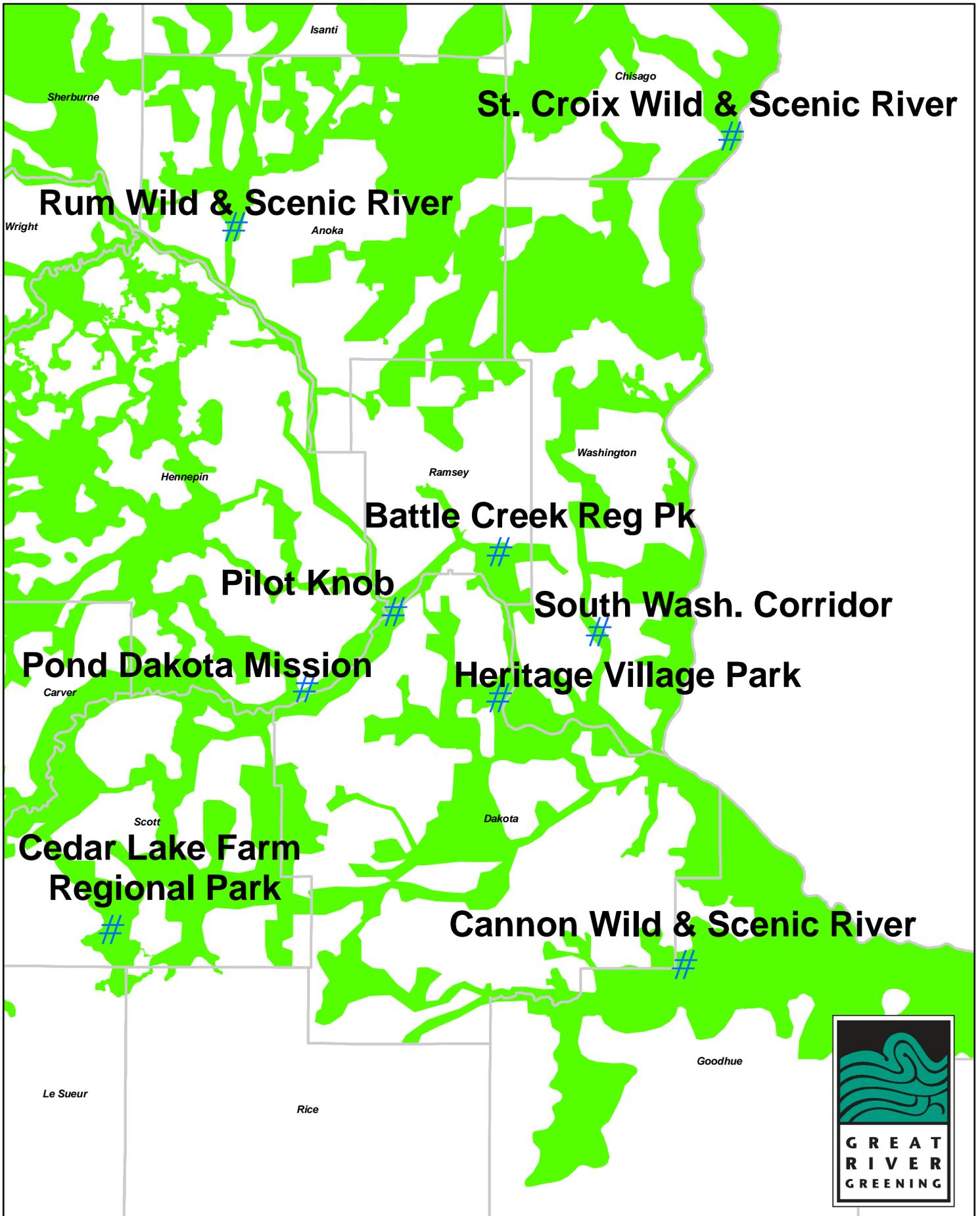
IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel: Ecologists, Field Crew, Volunteer Coordinator, Admin staff: 2.5 FTE total. 22% average benefit rate incl. 401k match	\$ 220,000
Contracts: Restoration Contracts: site prep, prairie installation, direct hardwood seeding, boom spraying, tree removal by e.g. Minnesota Native Landscapes, PRI, Applied Ecological Services, Zumbro Valley Forestry, Out Back Nursery, Mike's Tree Service, MCC, farmers and other local partners.	\$ 80,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Seeds, plugs, plants, mulch, erosion control blankets; safety supplies (chainsaw PPE \$500 max).	\$ 90,000
Travel: Mileage reimbursement at federal rate	\$ 5,000
Other: Volunteer Event expenses (tents/tables/chairs, portable toilets, overnight security, approved food and beverage) for at least 450 volunteers.	\$ 5,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 400,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Scott County WMO; Ramsey County Parks; National Park Service; South Washington Watershed District; City of Inver Grove Heights; City of Mendota Heights; Private landowners with DNR, NPS, or MLT Easements.	\$ 400,000	120K Sec. 280K Pen.
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:	\$ -	
In-kind Services During Project Period: Miscellaneous site prep, etc. NPS St. Croix River Easements: 5K, hand crew work Heritage Village Park: 20K earthwork, grading	\$ 35,000	25K Sec.
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): 2009 MeCC V (As of 9/1/10)	\$ 105,000	Unspent
Funding History: 2009 Phase V (in progress) - \$155,000 ENRTF; match \$TBD 2008 Phase IV - \$111,000 ENRTF; match \$144K non-state + \$116K other state 2007 Phase III - \$60,000 ENRTF; match •\$90K non-state + \$31K other state 2005 Phase II - \$100,000 ENRTF; match \$202K non-state 2003 Phase I - \$124,000 ENRTF; match >\$100K non-state	\$ 550,000	

MeCCVI - 2.3 Restoring Our Lands and Waters





Organization Description

The nonprofit Great River Greening leads and promotes community based restoration of natural areas and open spaces. Our team of experienced ecologists and landscape ecologists bring multiple years' combined experience managing native habitats, conducting natural resource inventories, fundraising for restoration projects on public lands, and engaging over 20,000 volunteers.

We have a regional reputation at all levels of community and government. For example the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has come to us for numerous partnerships: management for the Eagle Creek Aquatic Management Area (AMA) adjacent to private housing, the landowner incentive program for the Franconia – Scandia corridor, and restoration of Afton State Park, to name only a few. We are also a member of the Metro Conservation Corridors, a government-nonprofit collaboration of ten partners that has legislative funding for metro area protection and management.

Project Highlights

- Flint Hills Resources, Rosemount – This ongoing project is designed to restore and reconstruct prairie, savanna and oak woodland areas on the 700-acre Flint Hills property. It is part of the larger Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area, which has been identified by the DNR County Biological Survey as a site of high statewide biological significance. Greening continues to work with Flint Hills employee and community volunteers to implement the management plan designed by the DNR.
- Mounds Park Bluffs, Saint Paul – This ongoing project is located near culturally significant Native American burial mounds. The Bluffs, which overlook the Mississippi River and downtown Saint Paul, are also heavily used for their scenic value. The restorative design focuses on reducing erosion without obstructing the view, invasive species abatement and periodic prescribed burns.
- Pilot Knob, Mendota – Overlooking the Minnesota Valley and Fort Snelling, the site is widely recognized for its historical and cultural significance. Greening, in collaboration with Mdewakanton Dakota, City of Mendota and other partners are restoring oak savanna and prairie to this 24-acre site. In a 'top tier' township for SGCN needs and opportunities, this site is also being managed for non-game birds and native snakes.
- Pond-Dakota Mission Park, Bloomington - The site of historic Oak Grove Mission and the 1856 Gideon and Agnes Pond House, this historically important site is situated along and overlooks the Minnesota Valley NWR. Restoration of oak savanna and mesic woodland is occurring at the site over the next two years.

Project Manager

Wiley Buck, Restoration Ecologist (M.S., Wildlife Conservation, University of Minnesota) is responsible for project development and management, particularly for multi-year restoration projects such as Metro Conservation Corridors, a cooperative effort for protection and acquisition in priority areas of the metro, and Bucks and Buckthorn, a youth hunter and ecological education project. He served as Greening's conservation director in 2004 and 2005. Wiley gained his restoration expertise through his experience with McHenry County Conservation District, The Nature Conservancy, Chicago Wilderness, and the Minnesota DNR's Scientific and Natural Areas Program (SNA).

