

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

Subd: 04i3.2

Project Title: 3.2 - MeCC 6 - Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements

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): \$ 0

Summary:

To protect 150 acres of critical habitat in the greater metropolitan area by securing permanent conservation easements and dedicating funds for the perpetual monitoring, management, and enforcement of those easements.

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Sponsoring Organization: Minnesota Land Trust

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Location:

Region: Metro

Ecological Section: Paleozoic Plateau (222L), Minnesota and NE Iowa Morainal (222M)

County Name: Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Goodhue, Hennepin, Isanti, Le Sueur, Nicollet, Ramsey, Rice, Scott, Sherburne, Sibley, Washington, Wright

City / Township:

2011-2012 MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: MeCC 6–3.2 Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The Minnesota Land Trust has worked extensively in the greater Twin Cities area since 1992 to permanently protect natural and scenic lands with an emphasis on using conservation easements. This strategy has been acknowledged by a variety of stakeholders, and in the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, as one of the key tools necessary to achieve land conservation goals in a metropolitan area where escalating land values prohibit fee title acquisition of many priority lands.

Our goal is to permanently protect priority lands that contribute to a regional connected network of critical habitat within the greater Twin Cities area and help maintain water quality of some of the region's most important rivers, lakes, and streams. To this end, the Land Trust will work to identify tracts of land within the mapped project areas critical to the protection of habitat and shoreland. In particular, we will focus outreach to landowners along three of the region's Wild and Scenic Rivers – the St. Croix, the Rum, and the Cannon – and prioritize protecting high-quality habitat for a variety of migratory birds and species in greatest conservation need, such as common loon, red-shouldered hawk, northern pintail, bobolink, and wood thrush.

The Land Trust works only with perpetual conservation easements. These easements prohibit land uses or development that negatively affect important habitat and other conservation values, require habitat management plans as appropriate, and direct the use of native vegetation in conjunction with any required restoration. The Land Trust also will explore the potential for public access with landowners on a case-by-case basis. These easements are monitored annually and enforced as necessary under the Land Trust's comprehensive conservation easement monitoring, management, and enforcement program funded in part through our Stewardship and Enforcement Fund. Grant funds may also be requested for our dedicated Stewardship and Enforcement Fund on a project-by-project basis in accordance with our LCCMR-approved policies and procedures. The Land Trust will report to LCCMR annually on the status of the Stewardship and Enforcement Fund and the easements acquired with funds from this grant.

Proposed activities under this grant include: 1) contacting and negotiating with interested landowners; 2) drafting and completing conservation easements; 3) documenting property conditions; and 4) dedicating funds for the perpetual monitoring, management and enforcement of those easements.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Protect Significant Habitat through Conservation Easements Budget: \$400,000

The Land Trust will protect critical habitat within the mapped corridors with an emphasis on Wild and Scenic River protection by: 1) contacting landowners; 2) negotiating and completing 4-5 permanent conservation easements on 150 acres of land (including documenting property

conditions and creating management plans as appropriate); and 3) dedicating funds for the perpetual monitoring, management and enforcement of the easements.

The Land Trust will work primarily with donated easements, purchasing easements when necessary and then at below market value whenever possible. Criteria for determining when a purchase is necessary include landowner ability to donate, connectivity of parcel to other protected lands, and quality of natural resources on the site. Current potential projects are identified on the attached list. New projects will be added as landowners are identified. We will continually evaluate potential projects and pursue those that protect the highest quality habitat and maximize public benefit.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Protect 150 acres by completing 4-5 conservation easements by identifying and contacting landowners, completing all components of conservation easement projects, and dedicating funds for long-term management, monitoring, and enforcement.	June 30, 2013

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

The Land Trust is the only entity receiving funds through this request, however, the Land Trust coordinates its work with other Metro Conservation Corridors partners (please see overall proposal for list of project partners) as appropriate. Additionally, our partners include private landowners, as well as various units of state and local government that help in identifying and completing potential projects.

B. Timeline Requirements

We anticipate completing the 4-5 conservation easements by June 30, 2013.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

This project is part of the Land Trust’s long-term, strategic conservation agenda. The conservation agenda sets out the specific conservation focus of the Minnesota Land Trust. This focus includes natural habitats for wildlife, fish and plants, lakeshores, rivers and streams, and scenic landscapes accessible or visible to the public. The conservation agenda also identifies a suite of critical landscapes throughout the State that embody the natural and cultural features that make Minnesota unique. The Metropolitan Conservation Corridors is one of the Land Trust’s identified critical landscapes – one that addresses the unique conservation challenges that exist in a largely developed area.

The Minnesota Land Trust has a comprehensive easement monitoring and enforcement program directed at preserving the conservation values of protected lands. With each easement accepted, the Minnesota Land Trust will secure the funds necessary to meet our long-term obligations, setting aside funds for each project as necessary to meet future needs.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

MeCC6-3.2: Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements

IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel: Staff expenses including salaries, benefits (FICA, FUTA, SUI, worker's comp health insurance, 401 (k), etc.) and related costs for approximately 1 FTE for 2 years as follows: Conservation directors or other land protection staff (approximately 0.75 FTE) and Staff attorney and other support staff (approximately 0.25 FTE).	\$ 140,000
Acquisition (Permanent Easements): Includes purchase price of conservation easement(s); title work, insurance, etc.; maps, GIS (including project mapping by Community GIS); film; other (including appraisals, surveys, recording fees, etc.) to protect up to 150 acres of land.	\$ 182,000
Travel: Mileage and related travel expenses in Minnesota. \$2700 for mileage reimbursement estimated at \$0.50 per mile and \$300 for meals.	\$ 3,000
Conservation Easement Monitoring, Management, & Enforcement Fund: Funds dedicated to perpetually monitoring, managing, and enforcing 4-5 easements acquired and held by the Land Trust as needed. Estimated at \$15,000 per easement.	\$ 75,000
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: \$500,000 - These other funds represent an estimate of the potential value of easements donated to the Land Trust under this project. The value of donated easements is difficult to predict, but we believe we can achieve at least one million dollars in leverage.	\$ 500,000	Pending, dependent upon actual projects completed
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Unknown at this time.	Unknown	
In-kind Services During Project Period: While the Land Trust does not itemize the specific value of in-kind services, substantial amounts of unreimbursable staff time and overhead are required to complete land protection projects with ENRTF funding.	Unknown	
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation: Metro Corridors 2008: No funds remaining - grant completed. Metro Corridors 2009: \$214,000. Metro Corridors 2010: \$322,000	\$ 536,000	Remaining funds are committed to projects
Funding History: Metro Corridors 2005: \$230,000; 2007: \$134,000; 2008: \$225,000; 2009: \$250,000. These values represent past Trust Fund appropriations to prior phases of this project. They do not include donated value of easements or funds from other sources spent on projects completed or expected to be completed under these grants. Outdoor Heritage Fund 2009: Bluffland Prairie Protection (partial overlapping geography): \$500,000; Outdoor Heritage Fund 2010: Valley Creek \$838,000	\$ 839,000	Total includes MeCC funding only

2011-2012 Acquisition List for Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Proposal

Project Title: MeCC6-3.2: Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements

Project Manager Name: Sarah Strommen

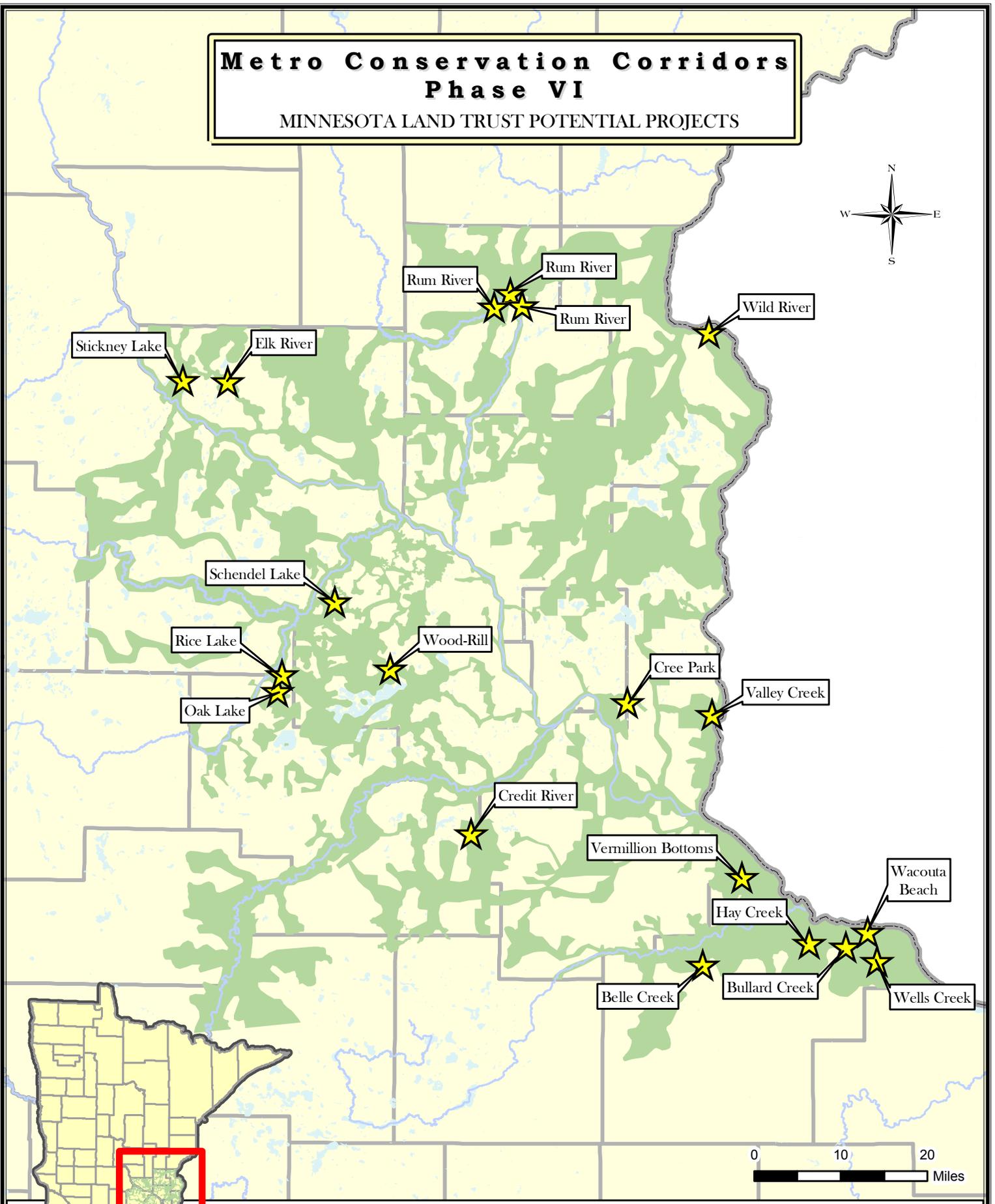
Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund \$ Request: \$400,000

Final Easement Holder(s): Minnesota Land Trust

#	Parcel Name	Acquisition Type (Fee-Title OR Conservation Easement)	County	Estimated # of Acres	Geographical Coordinates (Provide Latitude/Longitude OR UTM-X/UTM-Y)				Status
					Latitude	Longitude	UTM-X	UTM-Y	
1	Rum River	Conservation Easement	Isanti	36			476605	5049201	Potential project
2	Rum River	Conservation Easement	Isanti	65			481789	5049392	Potential project
3	Rum River	Conservation Easement	Isanti	40			479612	5051732	Potential project
4	Elk River	Conservation Easement	Sherburne	128			427213	5035394	Negotiations underway
5	Stickney Lake	Conservation Easement	Sherburne	600			418835	5035544	Negotiations underway
6	Schendel Lake	Conservation Easement	Hennepin	TBD			447080	4994399	Potential project
7	Wood-Rill	Conservation Easement	Hennepin	20			457290	4981950	Potential project
8	Cree Park	Conservation Easement	Washington	10			501414	4975686	Negotiations underway
9	Valley Creek	Conservation Easement	Washington	TBD			517082	4973532	Negotiations underway
10	Wild River	Conservation Easement	Chisago	10			516538	5044459	Potential project
11	Rice Lake	Conservation Easement	Wright	128			437261	4980942	Negotiations underway
12	Oak Lake	Conservation Easement	Carver	106			436427	4977756	Negotiations underway
13	Credit River	Conservation Easement	Scott	22			472326	4951410	Negotiations underway
14	Belle Creek	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	80			515393	4926932	Potential project
15	Bullard Creek	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	60			541896	4930355	Potential project
16	Hay Creek	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	140			535096	4931044	Potential project
17	Vermillion Bottoms	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	500			522675	4943287	Potential project
18	Wacouta Beach	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	16			545940	4933111	Potential project
19	Wells Creek	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	57			547650	4927714	Negotiations underway
<p>NOTES: This is a list of projects the Minnesota Land Trust currently is considering. Other projects may be added to the list as new landowners are identified and contacted. Some projects on this list will not be completed, while other projects may be completed under prior phases of this program.</p>									

Metro Conservation Corridors Phase VI

MINNESOTA LAND TRUST POTENTIAL PROJECTS



- Metro Conservation Corridors
- Minnesota Land Trust Potential Projects





Minnesota Land Trust
Our land. Our water. Our future.
Some things should be forever.

Minnesota Land Trust Organizational Overview

The Minnesota Land Trust preserves Minnesota's natural and scenic heritage through public and private partnerships. A 501(c)(3) public charity, the Minnesota Land Trust has been working with landowners and local communities since 1991 through the following three strategies:

- **PROTECT:** Directly protecting land through conservation easements, land acquisition and effective land management.
- **ASSIST:** Providing agencies, communities and organizations with assistance in planning and delivering on-the-ground conservation in order to expand the State's overall capacity.
- **ENGAGE:** Helping to foster a culture of conservation, to support enhanced conservation legislation and funding, and to ensure the state has highly-skilled, trained professionals.

As a statewide land trust, the Minnesota Land Trust has created a regional structure to deliver its programs effectively at a local level, with offices in Duluth, Ely, Red Wing and St. Paul. The Land Trust was one of first land trusts in the country to be accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and has also been recognized by the Charities Review Council as meeting all of its standards.

With a conservation focus on protecting Minnesota's natural and scenic lands—particularly its renowned lakes, rivers and streams—the Land Trust has completed 398 land protection projects, permanently protecting more than 35,000 acres and more than 700,000 feet of shoreline and aquatic resources.

Project Manager Qualifications

The Minnesota Land Trust employs 10 staff, relies on the skills of nearly 100 dedicated volunteers, and is governed by an active 17-member Board of Directors.

Sarah Strommen serves as the Conservation Director for the Land Trust's central region. Sarah joined the Land Trust staff in October 2005 and is responsible for developing and implementing the Land Trust's programs in the eleven-county greater metropolitan area and the counties to the west and north. Prior to joining the Land Trust, Sarah served as the Policy Director for the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness. She also recently served on the State's Clean Water Council and on the City Council for the City of Ramsey, where her duties included being the Council's liaison to the City's Environmental Policy Board and the Lower Rum River WMO. Sarah has a bachelor's degree in Biology from Grinnell College and a master's degree in Environmental Management from Duke University. She also was a Fulbright Scholar in Costa Rica, where she investigated sustainable development and bird conservation.

Other Project Staff

Nancy Kafka joined the Minnesota Land Trust staff in May 2008. As the Conservation Director for the southern region, she is responsible for overseeing the Land Trust's conservation activities in the Mississippi Blufflands and surrounding areas in southeastern Minnesota as well as in other areas throughout southern Minnesota. Nancy returned to Minnesota after nearly 30 years living and working in New England, most recently as the senior program director in the Parks for People program at the Trust for Public Land's Boston office. Nancy graduated from the University of Minnesota with a bachelor's degree in Housing.

