

2005 Project Abstract- Revised
For the Period Ending June 30, 2008

PROJECT TITLE: Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors Phase II –
The Trust for Public Land Critical Lands Protection Program (3.1)
PROJECT MANAGER: Cordelia Pierson
AFFILIATION: The Trust for Public Land
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WEBSITE: (If applicable) www.tpl.org
FUNDING SOURCE: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
LEGAL CITATION: ML 2005, 1st Spec. Sess., Chap. 1, Art. 2, Sec. 11, Subd. 5b.
APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$ 620,000

Overall Project Outcome and Results

In its Critical Lands Protection Program, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) used \$620,000 of Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund funds to secure fee title on approximately 166 acres. These funds leveraged an additional \$1,664,000 to secure fee title on an additional 727 acres. This effort secured a total of **893 acres** worth \$2,284,000 and conveyed them to public agencies for permanent protection. Individual protection successes include the following:

- TPL purchased 174 acres of land in the Twin Lakes habitat complex, including half a mile of shoreline on Horseshoe and Horseleg Lakes, and conveyed them to Isanti County for protection as an Isanti County regional park (**Horseshoe Lake**)
- TPL purchased 670 acres of land, including three miles of lakeshore and 450 acres of wetlands, in Chisago County. TPL conveyed the land to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for management and protection as a joint Wildlife and Aquatic Management Area (**East Rush Lake AMA/WMA**)
- TPL purchased 49 acres of land in the St Croix Valley (Chisago County) and conveyed them to the DNR for management and protection as the **Franconia Bluffs Scientific and Natural Area**.

TPL leveraged \$620,000 in Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund funding on these projects with **\$1,664,000 additional funds**, including the following:

- \$411,000 in non-state funding to protect 54 acres
- \$1,053,000 in state funding to protect 451 acres
- \$200,000 in MeCC funds contributed from partners to protect 222 acres

Project Results Use and Dissemination

TPL posted project information on the TPL website, www.tpl.org, in addition to DNR's posting at its web site. TPL included project descriptions in its newsletters, which are mailed to about 6,600 people, and worked with project partners to create and disseminate press releases for each of the projects. Articles were published in the *South Washington County Bulletin*, *North Branch Post Review*, and the *Isanti County News*. TPL sent an e-mail announcement to the Minnesota "TPL Near You" mailing list of approximately 1,200 email addresses, and provided information to Embrace Open Space for inclusion in its monthly e-newsletter (approximately 800 recipients). TPL worked with a nationally recognized photographer and Minnesota photographer to take photographs at two of the sites (Horseshoe – Peter Crouser; Franconia – Darcy Kiefel), and a staff photographer at the third site (East Rush Lake – Tom Evers). Land acquired has been or will be posted. Sample media materials are attached.

LCCMR 2005 Work Program Final Report

Date of Report: August 15, 2008 (Revised August 27, 2008)
LCCMR 2005 Work Program Final Report

I. PROJECT TITLE:

**Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors Phase II – The Trust for Public Land
Critical Lands Protection Program (3.1)**

Project Manager: Cordelia Pierson
Affiliation: The Trust for Public Land
Mailing Address: 2610 University Avenue West, Suite 300
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Web Page address: www.tpl.org

Total Biennial LCMR Project Budget LCMR Appropriation: \$ 620,000

First year appropriation: \$310,000
Second year appropriation: \$310,000

Legal Citation: ML 2005, 1st Spec. Sess., Chap. 1, Art. 2, Sec. 11, Subd. 5b.

Appropriation Language: Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors – Phase II. \$1,765,000 the first year and \$1,765,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for the second biennium for acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements with the Trust for Public Land, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Friends of the Mississippi River, Great River Greening, Minnesota Land Trust, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc., Pheasants Forever, Inc. and Friends of the Minnesota Valley for the purposes of planning, improving, 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 of natural resources. Expenditures are limited to the identified project 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. 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. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2008, at which time the project

must be completed and final products delivered, unless an earlier date is specified in the work program.

II. and III. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY:

*In its Critical Lands Protection Program, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) used \$620,000 of Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund funds to secure fee title on approximately 166 acres. These funds leveraged an additional \$1,664,000 to secure fee title on an additional 727 acres. This effort secured a total of **893 acres** worth \$2,284,000 and conveyed them to public agencies for permanent protection. Individual protection successes include the following:*

- *TPL purchased 174 acres of land in the Twin Lakes habitat complex, including half a mile of shoreline on Horseshoe and Horseleg Lakes, and conveyed them to Isanti County for protection as an Isanti County regional park (**Horseshoe Lake**)*
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- *TPL purchased 49 acres of land in the St Croix Valley (Chisago County) and conveyed them to the DNR for management and protection as the **Franconia Bluffs Scientific and Natural Area**.*

TPL leveraged \$620,000 in Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund funding on these projects with \$1,664,000 additional funds, including the following:

- *\$411,000 in non-state funding to protect 54 acres*
- *\$1,053,000 in state funding to protect 451 acres*
- *\$200,000 in MeCC funds contributed from partners to protect 222 acres*

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

Result 1: Acquire Significant Habitat

Description: The Trust for Public Land (TPL) secured fee title on 165 acres, protecting a total of 893 acres. These totals far exceeded the work program goals of 28 acres, with a total of 38 acres of valuable, high quality habitat protected. TPL applied all of the funding to the capital costs of land acquisition, and did not use any MeCC funding for transaction costs (appraisals, legal fees, surveys, environmental assessments, closings and agency expenses). All three of the protection projects resulted from overall Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors Project outreach and prioritizing based on resource mapping, stakeholder suggestions, and joint decisions made by the coalition of groups involved in this overall effort. Conservation efforts including landowner negotiations and education in the Twin Lakes and Franconia habitat areas continue in Phases III and IV of MeCC. These protection projects also represent instances in which TPL's help was solicited because of challenges to the public agency in accomplishing the conservation acquisition alone. Some of those

challenges included: large acreages; difficult and/or complex ownerships; a need for multiple funding sources; a high risk of development, and/or a short timeframe in which to work. The Trust for Public Land worked only with willing sellers. TPL transferred fee title to the appropriate, qualified public or private land steward, such as the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (East Rush Lake and Franconia St. Croix, or a local government (Horseshoe Lake). TPL donated to the land steward the land value of the MeCC funds.

EAST RUSH LAKE WMA/AMA:

The Trust for Public Land acquired +/- 670 acres on East Rush Lake in Chisago County in late February 2006 for \$603,000, and conveyed it to the Department of Natural Resources Division of Fisheries and Wildlife for protection as a Wildlife Management Area and Aquatic Management Area. The Trust for Public Land, Metro Greenways, and Fisheries contributed \$100,000 each in Metro Conservation Corridor funding to the project and Wildlife contributed \$303,000 in Wildlife Management Area bond funds.

This wetland property is a significant riparian environment and has a direct effect on the ecological processes of the lake and a tributary of the St. Croix River. With three miles of shoreline, the site includes critical habitat for fish, amphibians, migratory waterfowl and other key game and non-game species. The open water, emergent/submergent vegetation, and surrounding cover provide food material and habitat for small fish and invertebrates used by puddle ducks, divers, mergansers and wading birds. The site is also a very important area for migrating birds as well, including Tundra and Trumpeter Swans, Old Squaw, Scoters, canvasbacks, ring-necked ducks and other divers. The Minnesota County Biological Survey identified roughly 450 of the 670 acres as being very high quality wetlands, including tamarack swamp, shrub swamp, mixed hardwood swamp, and emergent marsh. Because of its location at the headwaters of Rush Creek, which is a tributary to the Wild and Scenic St. Croix River – a National Scenic Riverway – this large wetland complex performs significant water quality functions to an important watershed. This site provides the public excellent opportunities for plant and wildlife viewing, hunting (duck, turkey, grouse and deer) and fishing within an hour’s drive of the Twin Cities.

The Department of Natural Resources asked the Trust for Public Land to assist in protecting this site; as DNR Wildlife manager Dave Pauly said, “this acquisition sets aside increasingly scarce public hunting lands close to where most Minnesotans live. ... It is especially important that we continue to set aside such places in rapidly growing areas such as Chisago County, where natural resources are attracting development that in turn threatens the natural resources. Projects like these help break that cycle and assure a lasting quality of life.”

Partner on East Rush	Funding Source	Funding – committed for	Allocated Acreage	Notes
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Lake project		land acquisition costs		
TPL	Metro Wildlife Corridors-ETF	\$100,000	111	Lead
DNR Fisheries and Wildlife	Metro Wildlife Corridors-ETF	\$100,000	111	
Metro Greenways	Metro Wildlife Corridors-ETF	\$100,000	111	
DNR Wildlife	Bonding	\$303,000	337	
TOTAL		\$603,000	670	

HORSESHOE LAKE:

The Trust for Public Land acquired +/- 174 acres on Horseshoe and Horseleg lakes in Isanti County for \$1,156,100, and conveyed it to Isanti County on May 23, 2007, for protection as a county regional park, the first protection success in the high priority Twin Lakes area of Oxford Township, Isanti County.

This project resulted from county-level outreach meetings convened by Metro Conservation Corridors partners and the DNR Ecological Services Division selecting the Twin Lakes area as a high priority for increasing conservation. In working with landowners in the area and local government leadership, the MeCC partners determined that the Horseshoe and Horseleg lakes site would make an excellent first conservation success in the area, with the county providing leadership as the permanent land steward, and with the DNR likely playing a greater future role on stewardship of other sites. Horseshoe Lake is used by DNR Fisheries to rear walleye fry; its shallow depth provides winter kill, which actually helps maintain the wildlife qualities by reducing minnow and bullhead populations which compete with waterfowl for invertebrates and other food sources.

The dry prairie, non-forested wetland and shallow lake habitats on this particular site provide key habitats for species of greatest conservation need, and the dry oak forest and oak savanna complement those habitats. Birds sighted on the property and listed on the state species in greatest conservation need include American Bittern, American Woodcock, Bald Eagle, Black Tern, Black-billed Cuckoo, Brown Thrasher, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Mammal and reptile species of greatest conservation need that breed on or use the site include Blandings Turtles, Badgers, Western Hognose Snakes, and Mink Frogs.

The project protects nearly half a mile of shoreline on Horseshoe and Horseleg Lakes, which are shallow, low alkalinity lakes ideal for wildlife uses, with good submerged vegetation and maximum depth between seven and eight feet. The site is in the Anoka Sand Plain, characterized by sandy, highly permeable soils. The two lakes are perched, with a small watershed feeding them, and have no surface water outlet; they likely recharge the groundwater supplying local residents' drinking water.

Site protection will contribute to improving surface water quality, protecting drinking water quality and quantity, preventing flooding, and stabilizing soil.

Partner on Horseshoe Lake project	Funding Source	Funding for land acquisition costs	Allocated Acreage	Notes
TPL	Metro Wildlife Corridors-ETF	\$100,000	15.75	Lead
Isanti County	County park funds	\$296,000	43.5	
Oxford Township	Township funds	\$10,000	1	
Metro Greenways	Metro Wildlife Corridors (ETF) or bonding	\$100,000	15.75	
DNR Remediation Fund Program	Remediation Fund	\$500,000	75	
DNR Regional Park Program	Bonding	\$150,000*	23	
TOTAL		\$1,156,000	174	

FRANCONIA ST. CROIX BLUFFS SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA (SNA):

TPL acquired +/- 49 acres above the St. Croix River in Chisago County, and conveyed it to the DNR for management as an SNA. The land provides a critical ecological connection from the St. Croix bluffs to St. Croix National Scenic Riverway lands on the St. Croix River owned by the National Park Service.

Following Metro Conservation Corridors county outreach and prioritization meetings, Metro Conservation Corridors partners and the DNR Ecological Services Division identified as a top priority for conservation a six-mile stretch along the St. Croix River from Taylor’s Falls to Scandia, known as Franconia Scandia Corridor, including Lawrence Creek, seepage swamps, cliffs, prairies and pine forests. Half the area – primarily in the floodplain – is owned by the National Park Service, but the bluffs and uplands were increasingly vulnerable to over-development, habitat fragmentation, erosion and invasive species. The area contains a rich diversity of native plant communities and supports many rare bird species such as the Coopers Hawk and cerulean warbler. The high ecological quality of the area warranted creating a new Scientific and Natural Area in the corridor.

This site will receive the highest ecological protections for its outstanding biological diversity, rare habitats and geological features, and will be open to the public for passive activities such as birding, wildlife watching, viewing wildflowers, hiking, education and scientific research.

Partner on Franconia St. Croix Bluffs SNA project	Funding Source	Funding for land acquisition costs	Allocated Acreage	Notes
TPL	Metro Wildlife Corridors Phase II 2005-ETF	\$420,000	38.5	Lead
TPL	Metro Wildlife Corridors Phase III 2007-ETF	\$10,000	.9	
	Land Value Donation	\$105,000	9.6	
TOTAL		\$535,000	49	

Summary Budget Information for Result 1: LCMR Budget \$ 620,000
Funds Spent \$ 620,000

TOTAL LCMR PROJECT BUDGET:

All Results: Personnel: \$ 0
All Results: Equipment: \$ 0
All Results: Development: \$ 0
All Results: Acquisition: \$ 620,000 (Capital costs - includes fee title or easement acquisition; land transaction costs - title, survey, environmental assessment, appraisal)
All Results: Other: \$ 0

V. TOTAL LCMR PROJECT BUDGET: \$ 620,000
Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$3,500: NA

VI. PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE SPENDING

A. Past Spending: For Phase 2, the Trust for Public Land provided a significant in-kind contribution to development of the project, including serving on the Executive Committee, helping shape the initial proposal, contributing to partner and stakeholder communications, participating in stakeholder meetings held in June 2004 and September - October 2004, soliciting land acquisition project proposals, and helping lay the groundwork for project initiation in July 2005. Total in-kind contribution from July 2003 to date is equivalent to 1/8 FTE.

During the Phase 1 project term (July 2003 – June 2005), the Trust for Public Land leveraged the following non-state funding:

City of Eagan: \$720,000 (Eagan Core Greenway – Caponi)

Dakota County: \$850,000 (Eagan Core Greenway – Caponi); \$1,000,000 (Vermillion River WMA/AMA)

Federal - state wildlife grants: \$275,000 (Gordie-Mikkelson Wildlife Management Area); \$800,000 (Vermillion River WMA/AMA)

Other non-Metro Wildlife Corridors state funding includes:

Natural and Scenic Area grant: \$200,000 (Eagan Core Greenway – Caponi)

Remediation Fund grant: \$300,000 (Eagan Core Greenway – Caponi)

Metro Greenways: \$450,000 (Gordie-Mikkelson Wildlife Management Area)

The Trust for Public Land provided technical assistance and private funding to add 17 acres to the Pine Bend Bluffs Scientific and Natural Area in the Lower Mississippi focus area, in partnership with DNR Scientific and Natural Area Program, Metro Greenways, and Friends of the Mississippi River.

From 2002 until Phase 1 initiation in July 2003, TPL provided a significant in-kind contribution to development of the project, including shaping the initial proposal, facilitating partner and stakeholder communications, arranging stakeholder meetings held in October 2002, printing maps and producing project descriptions for stakeholder participation, organizing proposed focus area meetings held in March 2003, soliciting land acquisition project proposals, and laying the groundwork for project initiation in July 2003. Total in-kind contribution by July 2003 is equivalent to ¼ FTE. TPL has also invested land acquisition capital of \$50,000 to help the DNR purchase land in Dec. 2002 in the Lower Mississippi focus area for the new Pine Bend Bluffs Scientific and Natural Area, where restoration funds from other partners for this project are being invested.

B. Other Funds being Spent during the Project Period: The Trust for Public Land leveraged far more than the \$180,000 in public and private funds described in the work program, with a total of \$411,000 in nonstate funding; \$1,053,000 in state funding; and \$200,000 with other MeCC partners, for **a total of \$2,284,000.**

Project cooperators and supporters, in addition to project partners, include:

- Landowners
- Isanti County and Chisago County
- Oxford Township
- Nonprofit organizations and citizen groups advancing land conservation, including lake associations
- Foundations, corporations, and individuals contributing to land conservation
- National Park Service – St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

As needed to complete land protection projects, the Trust for Public Land worked with project cooperators to secure state bonding funds and other state funds from programs such as the Local Initiative Grant Program (Natural and Scenic Area Grants and Regional Nonmetro Park Grants), Remediation Fund Grant Program,

Metro Greenways, DNR Wildlife, DNR Fisheries, DNR Scientific and Natural Areas, and other bonding appropriations for land protection.

C. Future Spending: The Trust for Public Land anticipates that projected needs total over \$30,000,000 a year for 25 years to meet land protection and restoration goals in the growing metro Conservation Corridor area.

VII. PROJECT PARTNERS

Project partners in Phase II included Isanti County, Oxford Township and Chisago County; DNR Wildlife and Fisheries; DNR Ecological Services and Scientific and Natural Area program; Minnesota Land Trust; the National Park Service – St. Croix National Scenic Riverway; and several local conservation supporters in both Isanti and Chisago counties, including lake association members and St. Croix Conservation Collaborative participants. The Trust for Public Land coordinated its work with other LCCMR-funded partners of the Metropolitan Area Conservation Corridor Project. The Trust for Public Land conveyed title to Isanti County and the Department of Natural Resources. The Trust for Public Land contracted with entities providing real estate transaction services such as environmental consultants, appraisers and title companies.

VIII. DISSEMINATION

TPL posted project information on the TPL website, www.tpl.org, in addition to DNR's posting at its web site. TPL included project descriptions in its newsletters, which are mailed to about 6,600 people, and worked with project partners to create and disseminate press releases for each of the projects. Articles were published in the *South Washington County Bulletin*, *North Branch Post Review*, and the *Isanti County News*. TPL sent an e-mail announcement to the Minnesota "TPL Near You" mailing list of approximately 1,200 email addresses, and provided information to Embrace Open Space for inclusion in its monthly e-newsletter (approximately 800 recipients). TPL worked with a nationally recognized photographer and Minnesota photographer to take photographs at two of the sites (Horseshoe – Peter Crouser; Franconia – Darcy Kiefel), and a staff photographer at the third site (East Rush Lake – Tom Evers). Land acquired has been or will be posted. Sample media materials are attached.

IX. Intentionally deleted

X. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Periodic work program progress reports were submitted in February and August of each year, starting with February 2006. A final work program report is submitted here.

XI. RESEARCH – NA

Attachment A: Budget Detail for 2005 Metro Corridors Project

Date: August 27, 2008

Title: Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors Phase II – The Trust for Public Land Critical Lands Protection Program (3.1)

Partner Project Manager Name: Cordelia Pierson

LCMR Dollars: \$620,000

BUDGET ITEM	Amount Budgeted (\$)	Amount Spent (\$)	Balance (\$)	Comments
ACQUISITION				
Land acquisition <i>(fee title)*</i>	\$620,000	\$620,000	\$0	To protect +/- 670 acres on East Rush Lake in Chisago County, with additional funding from Wildlife bonding and other Metro Corridors partners and funding; to protect +/- 174 acres on Horseshoe and Horseleg lakes in Isanti County, with additional funding from Isanti County, Oxford Township, DNR Metro Greenways, DNR Remediation, and DNR Regional Nonmetro Parks; to protect +/- 49 acres at Franconia St. Croix Bluffs (Franconia SNA), with additional funding from private donation and Phase III MeCC funding (TPL).
ACQUISITION - SUBTOTAL	\$620,000	\$620,000	\$0	
TOTAL LCMR Funding	\$620,000	\$620,000	\$0	