

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2014 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 166-F

Lake Pepin Preservation: Enhancing Local Water Management Capacity

Category: F. Methods to Protect, Restore, and Enhance Land, Water, and Habitat

Total Project Budget: \$ 109,275

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 2 Years, July 2014 - June 2016

Summary:

Enhancing local capacity to address erosion problem areas by educating county boards about the benefits and feasibility of enforcing the state shoreland rule and of redetermining outdated drainage systems.

Name: Rylee Main

Sponsoring Organization: Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance

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Location

Region: Southwest, Southeast

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ Employment	_____ TOTAL _____%



PROJECT TITLE: Lake Pepin Preservation: Enhancing Local Water Management Capacity

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The South Metro Mississippi River, including upper Lake Pepin, is classified as “impaired” by the state of Minnesota due to high turbidity levels caused by excess sediment flowing from surrounding tributaries. Staff members at the Department of Natural Resources have prioritized watershed restoration through the implementation of best management practices on agricultural lands and stream corridors within the Minnesota River Basin as the most important and necessary action to reduce the sediment filling in Lake Pepin. Research on the sources of sediment, and the new and available practices to address excess sediment, are on-going; however, the scientific nature of these reports often results in the omission of one very real obstacle: the lack of political will to address sedimentation at the local level.

Utilizing a variety of federal, state, and local sources, our organization has aggregated data on the varying levels of soil erosion and shoreland management practices in all 37 counties in the Minnesota River Basin. In the coming year we will be supplementing this information with the collection of qualitative data by interviewing between 75 and 125 local government staff across the Minnesota River Basin. The results will be coded and organized to identify patterns of obstacles faced, resources available (including coordinating partners), future local priorities, and successful projects components.

Using this information, we will create issue-specific county reports to educate county boards and local government staff about the feasibility of project implementation in their county. The reports will be presented to county boards, as well as individual staff members upon request, with the goal of encouraging local enforcement of the state’s 50-foot shoreland rule, the redetermination of benefits process on drainage ditches, and increased water storage, among other projects.

County enforcement of the state’s 50-foot shoreland rule and the implementation of other best management practices are necessary to achieve the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s target of reducing sediment by 60% in the Minnesota River during high and very high flows and by 50 percent during average and low flows. County awareness and support for water and land use best management practices are also necessary components to achieving these targets. Our objective is to enhance local capacity to address local soil erosion issues, which taken together, are filling in Lake Pepin.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Issue-Specific County Reports

Budget: \$ 97,500

Utilizing formerly aggregated data, we will create issue-specific county reports that outline the major obstacles to addressing local soil erosion issues and the resources currently available to that county. Also included in the report will be examples of successful project implementation in counties with comparable conditions. These case studies will include information on the site location, project timeline, budget and funding sources, major obstacles (if any), and additional components rendering the project successful (e.g. citizen education).

Outcome	Completion Date
1. 37 Minnesota River Basin Issue-Specific County Reports	May, 2016



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2014 Main Proposal

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Activity 2: County Board Meetings and Presentations

Budget: \$ 5,775

Upon the completion of the issue-specific county reports, we will schedule presentations with county boards, as well as meet with local government staff as requested. Our presentations will highlight components of the county reports, discuss recommendations (if any), and answer further questions regarding the report contents. Where appropriate we will attend follow-up board meetings.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Presentation to 37 County Boards	May, 2016
2. Attendance at Follow-Up Board Meetings	June, 2016

Activity 3: Annual Stakeholder Meeting

Budget: \$ 6,000

As an evaluation tool and to continue upstream-downstream relationships we will host the first two in a series of annual stakeholder meetings which will be held near Lake Pepin, with future locations to extend along the Minnesota River. Local government staff, elected officials, and engaged citizens will hear a series of speakers summarizing current science and best practices, followed by break-out group discussions on local and regional challenges. The event will allow for networking, relationship building, and an assessment of persistent challenges.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Two Annual Stakeholder Meetings	June 2016

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Executive Director, Mike McKay, will oversee project direction and scope, and will host the annual stakeholder meetings. The issue-specific county reports and presentations will be carried out by project manager, Rylee Main, who will be assisted by a project analyst. The funds requested will be used toward the contract work of the project manager and project analyst. In-kind funds will be used towards the executive director’s time.

B. Timeline Requirements

The timeline for this project would extend from the beginning of the funding cycle in July, 2014 to June of 2016, covering a 24-month period. The county presentations will follow intermittently upon the completion of the county reports.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

Our main objective with this proposed project is to enhance local capacity to address sedimentation at the county level by providing up-to-date and usable information to local decision makers. Aspects of this larger project were started in June of 2012, gathering data on county practices. As new science, stakeholders, programs, and regulations come into play, our project has the potential to become an iterative one, through the updating and re-evaluating of current conditions. The process could be further developed or expanded upon with future funding.

2014 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Lake Pepin Preservation: Enhancing Local Water Management Capacity

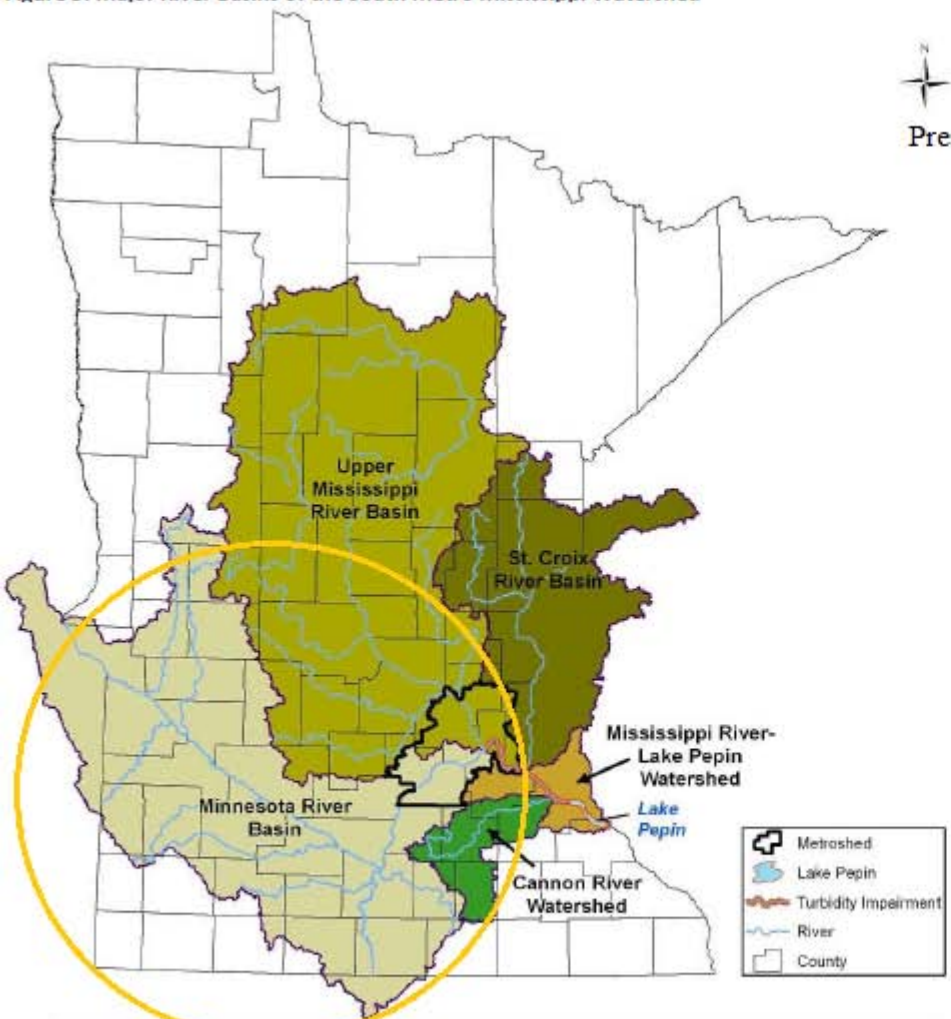
IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET: Two Years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u> (See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses", p. 13)	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel: Project Manager administers all project activities and oversees the work of the project analyst. (50% time, 100% towards contract fees, 24 months); Project Analyst manages database and graphics (25% time, 100% toward contract fees, 24 months)	\$97,500
Travel: Presentation of county reports in 37 counties across the Minnesota River Basin and follow-up attendance at monthly board meetings or meeting with local government staff as necessary.	\$5,775
Additional Budget Items: Annual Stakeholder Meeting	\$6,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 109,275

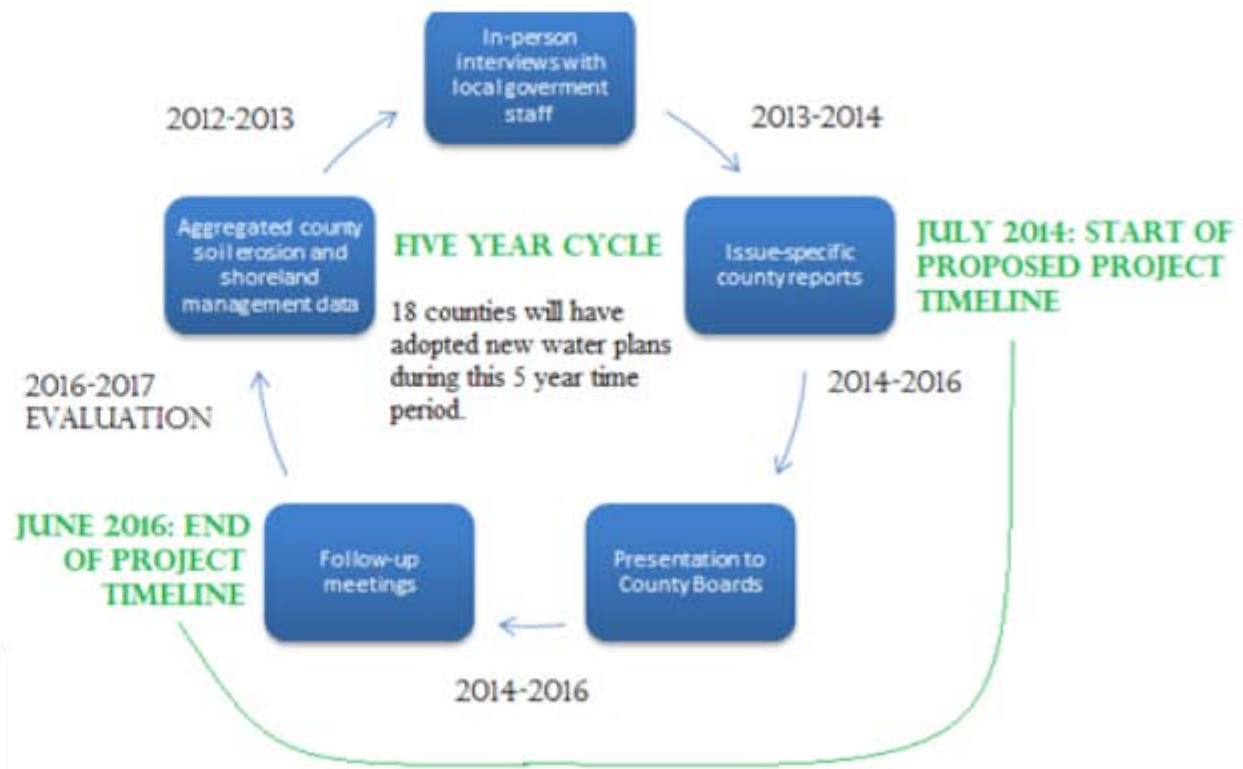
V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:	\$ -	
In-kind Services During Project Period: Executive director oversight (10% time)	\$ 14,000	<i>Secured</i>
Funding History: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (\$18,000); Red Wing Area Fund (\$9,000), Horizon Milling (\$1,000)	\$ 28,000	<i>Secured</i>

Figure 5: Major River Basins of the South Metro Mississippi Watershed



Preserving Lake Pepin: Enhancing Local Water Management Capacity in the Minnesota River Basin.



07/26/2013

The South Metro Mississippi Watershed is an immense watershed, comprising of 48 percent of Minnesota (MPCA graphic)

Project Manager Qualifications & Organization Description

The Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance is a multi-state non-profit organization established in 2009 by a citizen-led committee determined to preserve and restore Lake Pepin as an integral part of the Upper Mississippi River System. We are dedicated to slowing and reversing the current trend of sediment and nutrient flow to Lake Pepin. We bring a professional approach for public involvement in present and future watershed restoration activities that elevate the importance of implementation of the recommendations and “best practices” that science and reason dictate. Leading with the tools of education and information we will protect the natural heritage of Lake Pepin.

Project manager, Rylee Main, has been the lead on the project of which this proposal is a part since its start in June, 2012. She managed the collection, analysis, and dissemination of our baseline of aggregated data on county soil erosion and shoreland management best practices across the 37 counties in the Minnesota River Basin. Rylee established an Advisory Board to guide the second phase of this project which involves interviewing approximately 100 local government staff across the basin. The advisory board consists of key professionals in the water resources field ranging from agency staff, to academia, to local government and non-profit staff. Advisory board members include: Jason Beckler (Renville County), Shannon Fischer (MSU, Water Resources Center, Minnesota River Board), Beth Kallestad (Cannon River Watershed Partnership), Kathryn Kelly (Renville County), Harlan Madsen (Kandiyohi County), Kris Sigford (Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy), Scott Sparlin (Center for a Clean Minnesota River), Deborah Swackhamer (U of M, Water Resources Center), and Steve Woods (Board of Water and Soil Resources). Upon the completion of the initial phases of this project, Rylee will have spent two years managing project activities.

Rylee is a partner of Main Street Research & Consulting, which provides public policy research services ranging from full-scale research projects to survey design and assistance with the development and implementation of public policy research projects. Rylee received her Master’s Degree in Public Policy from the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

During her graduate work she concentrated in water resources and completed her thesis on policy alternatives for dredging operations in the Minnesota River. Rylee has experience conducting qualitative and quantitative research and offering policy and program recommendations. She prepared a comprehensive best practices report with program recommendations for the Environmental Law and Policy Center on energy efficiency portfolios for public utilities in the Midwest. Rylee has researched environmental behavior change as it relates to water while working for the Freshwater Society and she assisted the Freshwater Society and the National Parks Service in developing and implementing aspects of Farmwise, a farmer-to-farmer mentor program focused on agricultural best management practices.

Her graduate courses covered hydrology and watershed management, advanced research methods in statistics, natural resource applied economics, financial analysis, organizational management, and policy analysis. Rylee’s thesis brought her up to speed on the scale of the issues on the Minnesota River and her work with the Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance has made her an appropriate choice for administering these proposed project activities.