

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2018 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 193-F

Preserving Natural Shoreline on the St. Croix River

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

Total Project Budget: \$ 128,520

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 years, July 2018 to June 2021

Summary:

Preserving Natural Shoreline on the St. Croix River will provide landowners, local governments, and realtors/developers with necessary tools to protect our nationally-designated river's clean water and Wild and Scenic character.

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Sponsoring Organization: St.Croix River Association

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Location

Region: Metro

County Name: Chisago, Washington

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

The map shows the Lower St. Croix Riverway boundary and the location of National Park Service scenic easements. It shows the state managed zone and the federally managed zone.

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



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)
2018 Main Proposal
Project Title: Preserving Natural Shoreline on the St. Croix River

PROJECT TITLE: Preserving Natural Shoreline on the St. Croix River

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

In 1972, the lower St. Croix River became one of our country’s few national Wild and Scenic Rivers. Minnesota adopted zoning standards for a strip of land along the St. Croix River’s shores. This Riverway overlay zone consists of building restrictions intended to preserve the wild and scenic character of the Lower St. Croix Wild and Scenic River (LSCWSR). This project is designed to protect water quality, provide habitat for birds, fish, and wildlife, and maintain a relatively unspoiled view for the millions of visitors drawn to the Riverway.

Local governments administer the zoning rules designed to preserve the wild and scenic character of the LSCR. When the Riverway ordinances were adopted in the mid-1970s, local officials, zoning and administrative staff, and landowners were educated and informed about the Riverway rules. Significant turnover of property owners, local governments, and realtors living and working along the river, coupled with the trend to build larger homes, has led to conflicts and less adherence to established rules designed to protect bluffs and shoreland. Continued education is needed to ensure integrity of this buffer.

In 2015, the ENRTF supported the St. Croix River Association’s (SCRA) effort to build awareness of Riverway regulations that protect water quality and habitat along the LSCR. Further education and outreach on Riverway rules and best practices, water quality, and habitat protection is vital to the success of this project. Current efforts have shed light on new strategies to improve shoreland protection and increase natural landscape along the LSCWSR. SCRA has built trust with the communities along the LSCWSR and there is momentum to spark a cultural shift in our collaborative and preventative approach to protecting the LSCWSR.

For this project, realtors will implement and participate in an official St. Croix Riverway Certification program to ensure new homeowners are aware of landowner responsibilities and building restrictions in the Riverway. Local governments will focus on best practices for land-use applications in the LSCWSR, and a zoning administrators alliance will meet regularly to ensure consistency between communities. The early collaboration and communication between realtors, landowners, local governments, and government agencies will defend this thin ribbon of protection.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Landowner Land and Water Protection

Budget: \$38,200

Landowners will learn why it is important to maintain the natural vegetation, keep the impervious surface to a minimum, and maintain the integrity of bluffland.

Outcome	Completion Date
Build a suite of at least 3 resource tools for landowners to understand and communicate value and significance of Riverway protections.	12/31/2018
A welcome packet of resources is disseminated to new landowners in the Riverway	4/31/2018
At least four landowner training sessions will provide habitat improvement techniques	12/31/2019
A minimum of 10 landowners will do protection or restoration work	12/31/2020
80% of Landowners in the LSCR are aware of obligations and stewardship practices.	6/30/2021

Activity 2: Local Unit of Government (LUGs) Land and Water Protection

Budget: \$38,200

Work to uphold Wild and Scenic values and create consistency of zoning ordinances and processes between communities in the LSCWSR.

Outcome	Completion Date
Zoning administrators group with representation from 8 communities is formed and meets bi-monthly to discuss practices to preserve the natural shoreline along the LSCR	12/31/2018
Clear and orderly process for zoning applications is adopted by 5 LUGs to increase consistency of land use decisions and to uphold Riverway standards	12/31/2019
Three trainings on shoreland protection, Riverway standards, and land stewardship are held for local officials in the LSCWSR	4/30/2021



Activity 3: Realtor Certification Program

Budget: \$52,120

Realtors will help create and participate in a certification program consisting of reoccurring trainings, networking with federal, state, and local agencies, and best disclosure practices for natural resource protection.

Outcome	Completion Date
At least 10 key realtors from 5 realty offices participate in the certification planning team	12/31/2018
50 realtors from 10 realty offices participate in the first certification program	4/30/2019
15% of realtors working in the LSCWSR are certified in shoreland protection, water quality, Riverway disclosure, and landowner stewardship practices	12/31/2020
Certification program is sustainable with partners from the state and local levels	6/30/2021

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

No other partner requests funds from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources area hydrologist (currently Jenifer Sorensen) and the land use section (currently Jennifer Shillcox) and the National Park Service Lands Department (Laura Hojem) will provide technical support. Realty partners already identified include Amy Williams (Afton Realty), Sharon O’Flannigan (Coldwell Banker Burnet), local realty offices (Edina, Coldwell Banker, Keller Williams) and realty associations (St. Paul Area Association of Realtors). Local government partners include Mike Isensee (Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization), Brian Zeller (Mayor, Lakeland Shores), Bill Palmquist (City Council, Afton), Richard Bend (Mayor, Afton), Sara Taylor (Planner, Bayport), Neil Soltis (City Administrator, Scandia), Ron Moore (City Administrator, Afton), Cindie Reiter (City Council, Lake St. Croix Beach), and Ann Pung-Terwedo (Planner, Washington County).

Project Partner Receiving Funds

- St. Croix River Association, project management & program implementation

Project Partner Not Receiving Funds (All will provide technical support and implement strategies)

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Local Units of Government
- National Park Service at the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
- Homeowners in the 52 by ¼ mile protected zone, constituting the LSCWSR

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy

In the long term, this program will protect, improve, and restore natural vegetation adjacent to the St. Croix River, to protect water quality, provide wildlife habitat, and retain the magnificent views from this nationally designated, Wild and Scenic River. The realtor certification program will allow prospective landowners to seek out realtors who are well versed in Riverway rules and stewardship practices. Those landowners will raise the bar for better disclosure for properties in the Riverway and, in turn, increase long-term understanding of the Riverway protections and the importance of preserving a natural shoreline on the St. Croix. Once the program is established, the certification program will provide earned income revenue through registration fees. SCRA will work with other government and non-government organizations that can provide financial and technical support to landowners for permanent land protection, and habitat restoration services. This project has potential to be highly visible to the public and, if successful, could be duplicated along any waterway.

C. Timeline Requirements

Three years from start of funding is requested to complete all deliverables.

2018 Detailed Project Budget

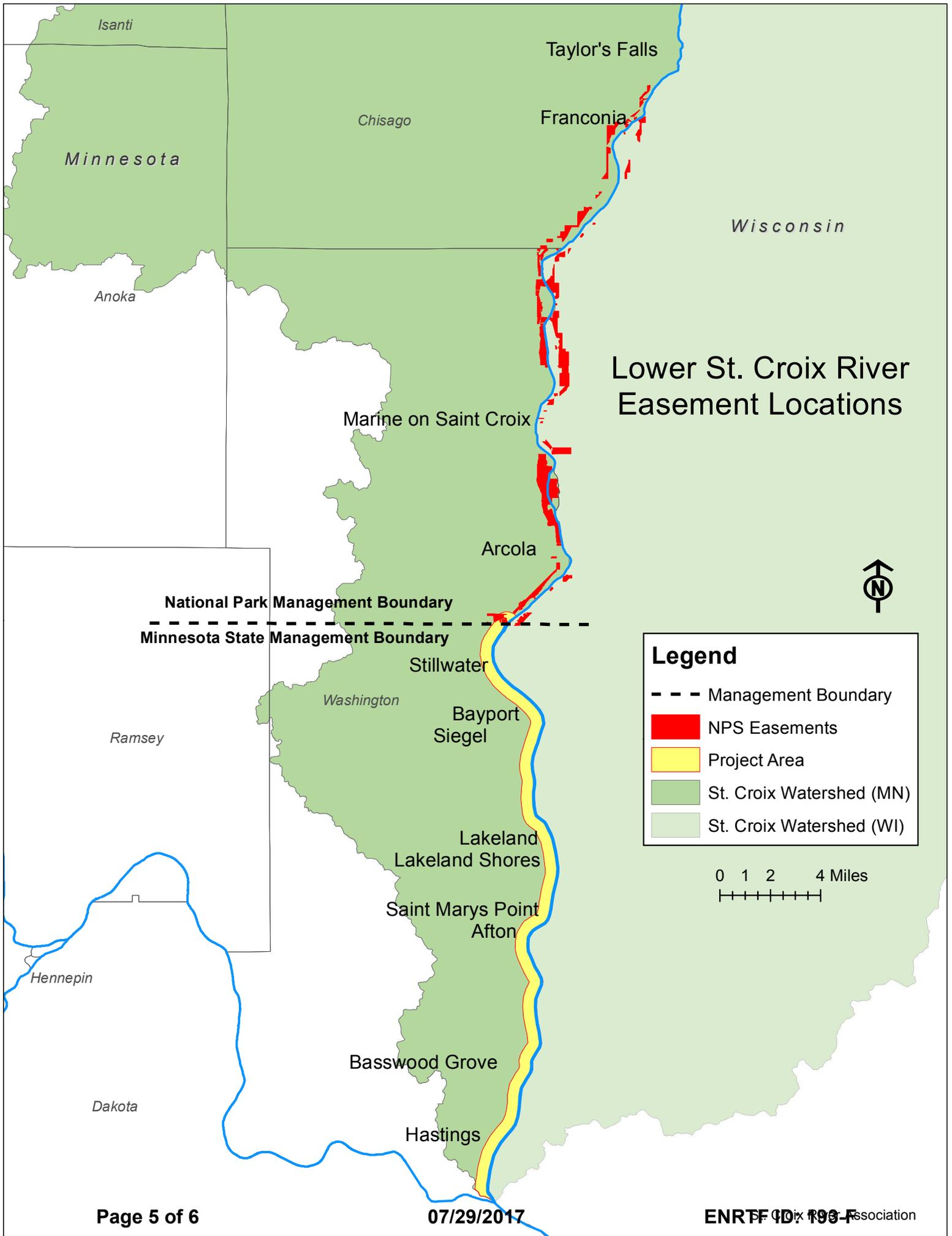
Project Title: Preserving Natural Shoreline on the St. Croix River

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 3 years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel: Natalie Warren, Project Manager (75% Salary, 25% Benefits), %75 FTE for year 1, 50% FTE for years 2 and 3.	\$122,810
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:	
Graphic design work to create educational materials for local governments, realtors, and landowners.	\$1,000
Web Development to update online resources and ensure a user-friendly platform for educational materials	\$1,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	
Printing: Print 50 copies of each resource for each of the 10 cities along the LSCR	\$500
Travel:	
Mileage (6000 miles, .535/mile), data gathering, meet with partners, implement training sessions, and landowner outreach	\$3,210
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$128,520

V. OTHER FUNDS

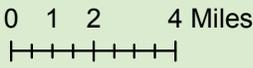
<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: SCRA will commit administrative and general office support, provide interns to help with outreach for landowners with easements, and smaller printing projects.	\$40,000	Secured
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:	N/A	
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:	N/A	
Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation: ENRTF ML 2011 "St. Croix Basin Protection: Coordinated, Innovative, Targeted" \$120,000 - ENRTF ML 2015 "Shoreland Protection for the St. Croix River" \$190,000 -		
Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation: SCRA is in the final implementing phase, and plan to expend the full appropriation and complete all objectives	\$98,845	Unspent



Lower St. Croix River Easement Locations

Legend

- - - Management Boundary
- NPS Easements
- Project Area
- St. Croix Watershed (MN)
- St. Croix Watershed (WI)



Preserving Natural Shoreline for the St. Croix River

Project Manager Qualifications

Natalie Warren, River Corridor Steward with the St. Croix River Association (SCRA), will act as project manager. Previous experience and her work to date at SCRA have provided Warren with key skills needed for this project, including management and coordination of multi-stakeholder initiatives, relationship building with local stakeholders, development of educational materials for the St. Croix River, and implementation of workshops to protect land and water. Warren graduated from St. Olaf College in 2011 with a degree in Environmental Policy. Prior to joining SCRA, she formed a non-profit organization called Wild River Academy to present 'urban' rivers as a natural, dynamic classroom for youth and to engage communities in their local water trails. In 2015, she worked with the River Management Society on a summary of publications about the economic benefits of water trails and consulted with communities on how to increase paddlesports tourism. Warren joined the St. Croix River Association in 2015 to help landowners, local governments, and realtors/developers do their part to protect the St. Croix River's clean water and Wild and Scenic character.

This project also will benefit from the expertise of partnering staff:

- Jen Sorensen, East Metro Area Hydrologist at Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: Sorensen works closely with local governments and with private landowners in the LSCR to implement conservation practices, encourage a clear and orderly process for zoning applications, and uphold Riverway ordinances.
- Mike Isensee, Administrator of the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization, Washington Conservation District (WCD): Isensee has extensive experience coordinating with local units of government and providing technical support for natural resource inventories, innovative stormwater management and implementation of conservation projects improvements.
- Amy Williams, Realtor with Afton Realty and former mayor of Lakeland: Williams has experience selling properties in the Lower St. Croix River and reviewing variance applications in the Riverway. She will help guide the realtor certification program for this project.

Organization Description

The mission of the St. Croix River Association (SCRA) is to protect, restore and celebrate the St. Croix River and its watershed. Since its inception in circa 1911, the SCRA has been a grassroots, citizen-led effort inseparably linked to the St. Croix River. From early petitions to protect fisheries from over harvesting, to hydroelectric dam operations, to new highway construction, to threats of direct sewage discharge, the idea of protecting the river has remained constant.

In the seven years since its staffing, SCRA has worked deliberately to target and prioritize conservation efforts resulting in the greatest pollution reduction, land protection, and stewardship growth. Thanks to the diligence of our 20-member Board of Directors, eight staff members, seasonal interns, and our well-established partnerships throughout the St. Croix Basin, SCRA has become the "go to" group for addressing issues that affect the St. Croix. Highlights of our work include:

- Establishing public and private partnerships, leveraging over \$1.9 million dollars of federal, state, and local funding for phosphorus reduction in the St. Croix watershed.
- Launching a Land Stewardship program to protect and restore important natural and scenic areas and encourage citizens to be the first line of defense for the River.
- Building a network of highly trained volunteers that issue blue-green algae alerts, and monitor invasive species and shoreline development.
- Expanding our Education and Outreach program to reach more than 36,000 people through enriching and engaging experiences that raise awareness, foster current and future watershed stewards, and encourage everyone to protect, restore and celebrate the Riverway.