

2001 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2004

FINAL REPORT

TITLE: Restoring Minnesota's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Corridors; Trust for Public Land (TPL)'s Critical Lands Protection Program.

PROJECT MANAGER: Susan Schmidt, Minnesota State Office Director

ORGANIZATION: The Trust for Public Land

ADDRESS: 2610 University Ave, Suite 300, St. Paul, Minnesota 55114

WEB SITE ADDRESS: www.tpl.org

FUND: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

LEGAL CITATION: ML 2001, First Special Session Chap. 2, Sec.14, Subd. 4e.

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$900,000

Overall Project Outcome and Results

Trust for Public Land's Critical Lands Protection Program worked in depth with two large landowners over the three year project period to acquire valuable, high quality habitat linkages resulting in achievement of our overall program goal of creating meaningful habitat corridors in the Aspen Parklands project area (#1) and Central Lakes project area (#4), respectively. TPL protected more than double the number of habitat acres anticipated.

In the Aspen Parklands project, a total of 2874 acres at **Thorson Prairie** (Polk County) were protected as a result of TPL's work. TPL's prorated portion of the protection work using \$577,102 in Phase I Trust Fund dollars resulted in an 810 acre addition to DNR's Chicog Wildlife Management Area. TPL's Thorson Prairie work also resulted in a 984 acre addition to a United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) waterfowl production area leveraging \$371,000 in federal duck stamp funds. Finally, TPL's fee title purchase at Thorson Prairie resulted in the protection of an additional 1080 acres by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) using TNC's Phase I Trust Fund dollars for a source of native prairie seed for its adjacent 24,500 acre Glacial Ridge Preserve. TPL's **Thorson Prairie** project – a substantial remnant of virgin tall grass prairie and a corridor for the region's deer, waterfowl, moose and prairie chicken – connected 27,200 acres of wildlife habitat overall.

In the Central Lakes project, a total of 149 acres and 1 mile of natural shoreline was protected with a protective conservation easement on privately-owned land located next to a county memorial forest on Clearwater Lake (Crow Wing County). The land will be managed as a DNR aquatic management area,.. TPL's prorated portion of the protection work using \$322,898 in Phase I Trust Fund dollars, \$328,030 in Phase II Trust Fund dollars, \$100,000 in TNC's Phase I Trust Fund dollars, \$199,072 in DNR Fisheries Phase II Trust Fund dollars,, and leveraging \$604,000 in *other non-LCMR* funds. This **TPL Clearwater Forest** project -- important as a small mouth bass fishery and as headwaters to the Nokasippi River in the fast developing Brainerd Lakes region -- connected 1350 acres of public and private habitat overall.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

The Habitat Corridors Partnership (HCP) uses individual project results such as Thorson Prairie and Clearwater Forest to guide its overall partnership goals and objectives for the future. The HCP summarizes cumulative project results in written fact sheets for dissemination. TPL, as one HCP project partner, posts HCP project results on the TPL website (www.TPL.org) and as part of TPL Minnesota's semi-annual newsletter. Both **Thorson Prairie** and **Clearwater Forest** have signs posted by DNR recognizing LCMR funding.

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August 18, 2004

LCMR Final Work Program Report

I. PROJECT TITLE: Restoring Minnesota's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Corridors; Critical Lands Protection Program (4c)

Project Manager: Susan Schmidt
Affiliation: The Trust for Public Land
Minnesota State Office Director
Mailing Address: 2610 University Ave, Suite 300
St. Paul, Minnesota 55114

Telephone Number: 651-999-5317 **E-Mail:** Susan.Schmidt@tpl.org **Fax:** 651-917-2248

Web Page address: www.tpl.org

Total Biennial Project Budget:

LCMR Appropriation: \$900,000

Amount Spent: \$900,000

Balance: \$ 0

Legal Citation: ML 2001, First Special Session Chap 2, Sec.14, Subd. 4e.

Appropriation Language:

\$5,873,000 the first year and \$5,872,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements with Minnesota Waterfowl Association, Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, Minnesota Land Trust, Trust for Public Land, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the U.S. Forest Service to restore and acquire fragmented landscape corridors that connect areas of quality habitat to sustain fish, wildlife, and plants. \$352,000 is for program coordination, corridor identification, and mapping. \$3,343,000 is for restoration and management activities in wildlife management areas, wetland habitat, lakes, wild rice beds, grasslands, and fisheries habitat. \$2,650,000 is for conservation easement programs on riparian areas, big woods forests, native prairies, and wetlands. \$5,400,000 is for habitat acquisition activities on prairies, riparian areas, and other fish and wildlife habitat corridors. As part of the required work program, criteria and priorities for planned acquisition and restoration activities must be submitted to the legislative commission on Minnesota resources for review and approval. Land acquired with this appropriation must be sufficiently improved to meet at least minimum management standards as determined by the commissioner of natural resources. 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 so designate any lands acquired in less than fee title. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2004, 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

Trust for Public Land's Critical Lands Protection Program worked in depth with two large landowners over the three year project period to acquire valuable, high quality habitat linkages resulting in achievement of our overall program goal of creating meaningful habitat corridors in the Aspen Parklands project area (#1) and Central Lakes project area (#4), respectively. TPL protected more than double the number of habitat acres anticipated.

In the Aspen Parklands project, a total of 2874 acres at **Thorson Prairie** (Polk County) were protected as a result of TPL's work. TPL's prorated portion of the protection work using \$577,102 in Phase I Trust Fund dollars resulted in an 810 acre addition to DNR's Chicog Wildlife Management Area. TPL's Thorson Prairie work also resulted in a 984 acre addition to a United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) waterfowl production area leveraging \$371,000 in federal duck stamp funds. Finally, TPL's fee title purchase at Thorson Prairie resulted in the protection of an additional 1080 acres by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) using TNC's Phase I Trust Fund dollars for a source of native prairie seed for its adjacent 24,500 acre Glacial Ridge Preserve. TPL's **Thorson Prairie** project -- a substantial remnant of virgin tall grass prairie and a corridor for the region's deer, waterfowl, moose and prairie chicken -- connected 27,200 acres of wildlife habitat overall.

In the Central Lakes project, a total of 149 acres and 1 mile of natural shoreline was protected with a protective conservation easement on privately-owned land located next to a county memorial forest on Clearwater Lake (Crow Wing County). The land will be managed as a DNR aquatic management area,.. TPL's prorated portion of the protection work using \$322,898 in Phase I Trust Fund dollars, \$328,030 in Phase II Trust Fund dollars, \$100,000 in TNC's Phase I Trust Fund dollars, \$199,072 in DNR Fisheries Phase II Trust Fund dollars,, and leveraging \$604,000 in *other non-LCMR* funds. This TPL **Clearwater Forest** project -- important as a small mouth bass fishery and as headwaters to the Nokasippi River in the fast developing Brainerd Lakes region -- connected 1350 acres of public and private habitat overall.

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result #1: Aspen Parklands

TPL worked with one landowner to purchase the 2874 acre Thorson Prairie in Polk County. TPL protected this fee title acquisition project in three parts:

- TPL purchased the northern portion of the prairie property (1080 acres) on July 30, 2002, and conveyed the property to TNC for enhancement of its adjacent Glacial Ridge Preserve (GRP) and as a source of native prairie for land restoration in the area. In order to avoid double counting, TNC reports these 1080 acres as it's Phase I Trust Fund accomplishment to LCMR
- TPL purchased the southern portion of the Polk County prairie property (810 acres) on October 1, 2002, using Phase I Trust Fund dollars and donated the property to DNR/Wildlife as an addition to the adjacent Chicog Wildlife Management Area.
- TPL purchased the third and final portion of the Polk County prairie property (984 acres) on 2/21/03 and conveyed it to the USFWS for addition to an adjacent waterfowl production area.

The following breakdown of dollars, acres and other funds is intended for LCMR reporting purposes only.

TPL's Thorson Prairie Fee Acquisition, Polk County

Fund Source	Amount	Other funds leveraged by TPL	Other Phase I Trust Fund dollars reported by another HCP partner	Acres	Other acres that cannot be double counted	Adjacent acres
TPL's Phase I Trust Fund dollars	\$577,102			810		
USFWS Duck Stamp Funds		\$371,000		984		
TNC's Phase I Trust Fund dollars			\$643,885		1080 added to Glacial Ridge Preserve for seed bank	
TNC's Glacial Ridge Preserve						24,200 acres
TOTAL *	\$577,102	\$371,000	\$643,885	1794	1080	Approximately 27,200 acres in a protected habitat corridor in Project Area #1

Result #2: Project Area #4 (Central Lakes):

TPL purchased a protective conservation easement on 149 acres and one mile of natural shoreline on the privately-held Clearwater Forest land on Clearwater Lake in Crow Wing County. The land will be managed as a DNR aquatic management area.. This Clearwater Forest project is important as a small mouth bass fishery and as headwaters to the Nokasippi River in the fast developing Brainerd Lakes region. The following breakdown of dollars, acres, shoreline and other funds is for LCMR reporting purposes only.

Clearwater Forest, Crow Wing County: TPL's Conservation Easement Purchase

Fund Source	Fund Amount	% for LCMR reporting ONLY	Acres / Shoreland protected for LCMR reporting ONLY	Adjacent acres
TPL's Phase I Trust Fund dollars	\$322,898	20.8%	31 acres with .21 miles of shoreline	
TPL's Phase II Trust Fund dollars	\$328,030	21.2.%	32 acres with .21 miles of shoreline	
TNC's Phase I Trust Fund dollars	\$100,000	6%	9 acres with .06 miles of shoreline	
DNR Fisheries Phase II Trust Fund dollars	\$199,072	13%	19 acres with .13 miles of shoreline	
DNR Fisheries Game and Fish	\$200,000	13%	20 acres with .13 miles of shoreline	
RIM CHM	\$202,000	13%	19 acres with .13 miles of shoreline	
Landowner donation	\$202,000	13%	19 acres with .13 miles of shoreline	
TOTAL value*	\$1,554,000	100%	149 acres / approx. 1 mile shoreline	See note below *

* This 149 acre land protection project results in a protected public / private habitat corridor within Project Area #4 of 1350 acres. This includes the 300 acre Crow Wing County Memorial Forest to the west, a 5 acre DNR public water access to the north and 900 acres to the east and south owned by Clearwater Forest as a nature based outdoor camp. Clearwater Forest might consider additional protection of some of these contiguous acres in the future.

V. Dissemination

The Habitat Corridors Partnership (HCP) uses individual project results such as Thorson Prairie and Clearwater Forest to guide its overall partnership goals and objectives for the future. The HCP summarizes cumulative project results in written fact sheets for dissemination. TPL, as one HCP project partner, posts HCP project results on the TPL website (www.TPL.org) and as part of TPL Minnesota's semi-annual newsletter. Both **Thorson Prairie** and **Clearwater Forest** have signs posted by DNR recognizing LCMR funding.

VI. Context

TPL has protected over 27,572 acres of land valued at \$43.4 million in Minnesota. TPL Minnesota expects to work with many landowners and partners to continue this level of conservation success in the future using these and other federal, state, local and private funds.

This is the first of a 10 phase, 20 year-long Habitat Corridor Partnership (HCP) program. The HCP program is committed to leveraging new, additional dollars (\$3 to \$4 other dollars for every LCMR dollar spent) as a result of this coordinated effort to establish a more effective, healthier habitat network for the state as a whole. HCP is intended to accelerate the protection of these key, remaining habitat linkages which is substantially above and beyond what can be conserved with "traditional" bonding and / or LCMR funds.

VII. Cooperation

TPL has worked very closely with DNR Wildlife, TNC, USFWS, DNR Fisheries, two large landowners, numerous county and township boards, citizen and hunting groups on these two HCP conservation projects.

TPL assists the overall HCP as a member of the partnership steering committee and as an active participant in various HCP committees. TPL has assisted the HCP with outreach meetings and outreach tools so that more landowners, more local conservation leaders and, ultimately more Minnesotans, benefit and shape HCP partnership goals and objectives. Habitat Corridors partners include: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, various divisions of MN DNR, 3 Native American Tribes, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, MN Deer Hunter's Association, Pheasants Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation, Minnesota Land Trust, Minnesota Valley Trust Inc., and the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

VIII Location

Project areas #1 and #4

ATTACHMENT A

Project Title: CH-01, Restoring Minnesota's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Corridors

Project Number: Critical Lands Protection - The Trust for Public Land (4c)

LCMR Funding: \$900,000

Attachment A Deliverable Products and Related Budget - LCMR Funds Only

2001 LCMR Project Biennial Budget	Objective/ Result	Objective/ Result	TOTAL SPENT:
	Result 1 Spent	Result 2 Spent	
Budget Item			
Land acquisition	530,000.00	322,898.00	852,898.00
Personnel			
"Other" Costs			
Transaction costs(1)	45,064.91		45,064.91
DNR Acquisition Costs(2)	2,037.50		2,037.50
Travel Costs			
COLUMN TOTAL	577,102.00	322,898.00	900,000.00

- (1) Title, closing, appraisal, environmental assessment, recording costs associated with the acquisition of Thorson Prairie
- (2) DNR professional costs associated with Thorson Prairie specifically Attorney General, appraisal review and engineering.

18-Nov-04