

## **2011 Project Abstract**

For the Period Ending June 30, 2015

**PROJECT TITLE:** MeCC VI - Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Cons. Easements (3.2) AND MeCC VI - 1.1 - Coordination, Mapping & Outreach

**PROJECT MANAGER:** John Brosnan

**AFFILIATION:** Minnesota Land Trust

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**FUNDING SOURCE:** Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

**LEGAL CITATION:** M.L. 2011, First Special Session, Chp. 2, Art.3, Sec. 2, Subd. 04i3.2

**APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$420,000.00**

### **Overall Project Outcomes and Results**

During the sixth phase of the Metro Corridors project, the Minnesota Land Trust worked with landowners throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area to permanently protect important lands and Minnesota's remaining natural areas. Three perpetual conservation easements were completed that collectively protected 317 acres of land and more than 4,300 feet of shoreline, exceeding the grant obligations by 167 acres. Two easements were purchased, both as bargain sales; one easement was donated. All three projects were unique opportunities to protect high quality natural habitat and riparian areas. These projects include:

- Sunrise Lake (Chisago County): A 79-acre property of mixed hardwood and conifer forest, wetland, grassland and agricultural field in close proximity to Carlos Avery WMA.
- Tennyson Lake (Isanti County): A 158-acre property of wetlands, mixed hardwood and pine forest, open water, grasslands, and agricultural land, with 4,375 feet of undeveloped shoreline on Tennyson Lake and Spencer Brook.
- Rush River (Sibley County): A 79-acre property of open fields, wooded bluffslands, sloping ravines, and lowland forest lying adjacent to the Minnesota River and Rush River County Park.

Baseline property reports were prepared for each easement, detailing the condition of the property for future monitoring and enforcement. LCCMR provided \$55,000 in grant funds to the Land Trust's dedicated Stewardship and Enforcement Fund for this required perpetual obligation. \$45,000 was for the three new projects under this phase of the Metro Corridors project, while \$10,500 was for an easement project from the previous phase of the Metro Corridors project. The Land Trust will report to LCCMR annually on both the status of the Stewardship and Enforcement Fund and the easements acquired with funds through this grant.

Total appraised value for the two purchased easements was \$267,000, with the grant providing \$209,080; donated value of these bargain sales was \$57,920. No appraisal was completed for the donated easement. The cost to the State of Minnesota to complete these projects was \$801 per acre. Cumulatively, across all phases of the Metro Corridors program, the Land Trust has protected 3,989 acres of critical habitat and 80,000 feet of shoreline, at a cost to the State of \$453 per acre. The Land Trust's work on this project demonstrates the continued cost effectiveness of using conservation easements to protect natural and scenic resources within developed and developing areas, as the cost to the State was well below the cost to purchase land in the Twin Cities region.

### **Project Results Use and Dissemination**

The Land Trust continued to gain more experience with conservation easements, easement management, and issues unique to protecting land in a metropolitan area. This experience and information was shared with our partner organizations, other easement holders, local communities, and policy makers. The Land Trust also disseminated information about the specific land protection projects completed under this grant through our newsletter, annual report (4,200 pieces), web site, and press releases. Additionally, the MeCC Partnership maintains an interactive public web map that shows the locations of MeCC projects over time. This web map can be accessed at: [www.dnr.state.mn.us/maps/MeCC/mapper.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/maps/MeCC/mapper.html)



**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)  
M.L. 2011 Work Plan Final Report**

**Date of Status Update:** 8/17/2015

**Final Report**

**Date of Work Plan Approval:** 8/11/2011

**Project Completion Date:** 6/30/2015

**Project Title: MeCC VI - Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Cons. Easements (3.2) AND MeCC VI - 1.1 - Coordination, Mapping & Outreach**

**Project Manager:** Wayne Ostlie

**Affiliation:** Minnesota Land Trust

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**Location:**

**Counties Impacted:** Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Goodhue, Hennepin, Isanti, Le Sueur, Nicollet, Ramsey, Scott, Sherburne, Sibley, Washington, Wright

**Ecological Section Impacted:** Minnesota and Northeast Iowa Morainal (222M)

<b>Total ENRTF Project Budget:</b>	<b>ENRTF Appropriation \$:</b>	420,000.00
	<b>Amount Spent \$:</b>	352,794.83
	<b>Balance \$:</b>	67,205.17

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2011, First Special Session, Chp. 2, Art.3, Sec. 2, Subd. 04i3.2

**Appropriation Language:**

\$1,737,000 the first year and \$1,738,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for the acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements. Of this appropriation, \$150,000 the first year and \$150,000 the second year are to the commissioner of natural resources for agency programs and \$3,175,000 is for the agreements as follows: \$100,000 the first year and \$100,000 the second year with Friends of the Mississippi River; \$517,000 the first year and \$518,000 the second year with Dakota County; \$200,000 the first year and \$200,000 the second year with Great River Greening; \$220,000 the first year and \$220,000 the second year with Minnesota Land Trust; \$300,000 the first year and \$300,000 the second year with Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.; and \$250,000 the first year and \$250,000 the second year with The Trust for Public Land for planning, restoring, and protecting priority natural areas in the metropolitan area, as defined under Minnesota Statutes, section 473.121, subdivision 2, and portions of the surrounding counties, through contracted services, technical assistance, conservation easements, and fee title 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 corridor areas as defined in the work program. This appropriation may not be used for the purchase of habitable residential structures, unless expressly approved in the work program. All conservation easements must be perpetual and have a natural resource management plan. Any land acquired in fee title by the commissioner of natural resources with money from this appropriation must be designated as an outdoor recreation unit under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.07. The commissioner may similarly designate any lands acquired in less than fee title. A list of proposed restorations and fee title and easement acquisitions must be provided as part of the required work program. An entity that acquires a conservation easement with appropriations from the trust fund must have a long-term stewardship plan for the easement and a fund established for monitoring and enforcing the agreement. Money appropriated from the trust fund for easement acquisition may be used to establish a monitoring, management, and enforcement fund as approved in the work program. An annual financial report is required for any monitoring, management,

and enforcement fund established, including expenditures from the fund. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2014, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

**I. PROJECT TITLE:** MeCC VI-3.2 – Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements AND MeCC VI - 1.1 - Coordination, Mapping & Outreach

**II. PROJECT SUMMARY:**

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. The conservation easements may be either purchased or donated, or a combination of the two (bargain purchase). These easements are monitored annually and enforced as necessary under the Land Trust's comprehensive conservation easement monitoring, management, and enforcement program. In order to fulfill these stewardship obligations, 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 and as described in the documents attached to the initial work plan for this appropriation. The Land Trust will report to LCCMR annually on the status and performance of the Stewardship and Enforcement Fund and monitoring activity associated with easements acquired with funds from this grant. This reporting includes submitting an annual financial audit of the Stewardship and Enforcement Fund.

Proposed activities under Activity 1 of 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. Activity 2 of this project provides mapping, coordination and leadership for the partnership by Minnesota Land Trust staff.

**III. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:**

**Project Status as of February 1, 2015:**

In December of 2014, the Land Trust closed on the Rush River project, which protected 79 acres of grasslands, hardwood forest and floodplain forest in Sibley County. The property is immediately adjacent to the Rush River County Park, creating a complex of over 360 acres of protected land. The Trust continues to work with the landowners of the Carnelian Creek property. That conservation easement has been drafted and received DNR Commissioner approval.

On Mapping, a new ecological analysis has recently been completed as part of the overall MeCC Mapping work. This work entailed creating new MLCCS data, combining MLCCS data with the most recent National Land Cover Dataset information, and refining habitat models for the specific

characteristics of the MeCC area. Results will be posted soon and will provide guidance for new MeCC focus areas.

**Project Status as of August 1, 2014:**

In June of 2014, the Land Trust closed on the Tennyson Lake (Barrett) project, which protected 158 acres of mixed hardwood forest, grasslands, wetlands and 12 acres of agricultural fields. This project also protected approximately 2,990 linear feet of undeveloped riparian shoreline on Tennyson Lake and 1,385 linear feet of undeveloped riparian shoreline along Spencer Brook. The Land Trust continues to pursue completion of projects at the Carnelian Creek and Rush Lake sites. The Carnelian Creek project has already received DNR Commissioner approval.

**Amendment Request (6/11/14):**

The Land Trust is requesting to change the project manager to reflect a staff transition. The Land Trust is also requesting an extension of the funds until June 30, 2015.

*Amendment Approved: June 26, 2014*

**Project Status as of February 1, 2014:**

In December of 2013, the Land Trust closed on the Sunrise Lake (Barnes) project which protected 79 acres of mixed forest, grassland, wetland property and included 10 acres of agriculture. The additional properties that were expected to close by the end of 2013 (Rush Lake, Tennyson Lake and Carnelian Creek) are still likely candidates to close before the next Status Update. The Tennyson Lake landowner and the Moose Lake landowner are negotiating bargain sales. Depending on their willingness to negotiate, the Land Trust may have to request moving some funds from Staff to Acquisition in order to make both projects fit within this grant.

**Amendment Request (11/1/13):**

The Land Trust is requesting to add the Sunrise Lake property to the Parcel List. The property lies immediately to the east of Sunrise Lake and to the north of North Center Lake near the town of Lindstrom in Chisago County. The property is 2.5 miles east of the Sunrise River and the Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area. It is located within the Mille Lacs Uplands ecological subsection and is within the established priority areas for Metro Conservation Corridors as defined by Minnesota Laws 2011, First Special Session, Chapter 2, Article 3, Section 2, Subdivision 4(i). The 80 acre property is a mix of forest, woodland, grassland, wetland and approximately 9.6 acres of agriculture.

*Amendment Approved: November 15, 2013.*

**Project Status as of August 1, 2013:**

The Land Trust anticipates that we will complete three projects by the end of 2013. We continue to focus on these three critical projects (Rush Lake, Tennyson Lake and Carnelian Creek), two of which are to be donated.

Additionally, we continue to work with several other landowners, and we have identified one new project that we're requesting be added to our project list.

**Project Status as of July 16, 2013:**

**Request to Amend Work Plan:**

The Land Trust is requesting an amendment to change the project manager due to a staff transition. Amendment approved July 19, 2013.

**Project Status as of February 1, 2013:**

The Land Trust continues to work on several projects, with particular emphasis on three that we believe could potentially close under this grant. Additionally, as indicated by the ~~strikeout~~ and underline above and on the Work Plan attachments, the Land Trust is requesting a Work Plan amendment to change

the project manager due to a staff transition. Finally, the reporting schedule under the Reporting Requirements section and appropriate areas throughout the document were amended to reflect the project completion date of June 30, 2014, as consistent with the appropriation language. Amendment approved April 3, 2013.

Additionally, we have identified two new projects that we're requesting be added to our project list.

**Project Status as of August 1, 2012:**

The Land Trust completed one conservation easement protecting 80 acres in Anoka County in June 2012. This easement was purchased at a bargain price using funds from our 2010 (Phase 5 Supplemental) grant. We did dedicate some funds from this 2011 grant to the Stewardship and Enforcement Fund, so while the project deliverables are counted under our 2010 final report, the project results are described in more detail below.

Additionally, we continue to work with several other landowners, and we have identified one new project that we're requesting be added to our project list.

**Project Status as of February 1, 2012:**

At this point in time, we have not yet incurred any expenses from the 2011 grant. While we do anticipate that some of the projects the Land Trust currently is pursuing will require funds from both the 2010 and 2011 grants, we have not yet needed any 2011 funds.

**Project Status as of October 5, 2011:**

**Request to Amend Budget and Work on Grants Concurrently**

The Land Trust currently is working to complete the 2010 grant. While we have projects identified that will complete our grant obligations, timing needs of certain projects make it necessary for us to adjust our 2010 budget to reduce the acquisition category and increase the personnel category. To balance out this 2010 adjustment, we also are requesting an adjustment to the 2011 budget to reduce personnel and increase acquisition.

Additionally, our plan for completion of both grants requires that we work on the 2010 and 2011 grants concurrently, as some projects may require funds from both grants. Therefore, we are requesting approval to be able to work on both the 2010 and 2011 grants concurrently. An updated Attachment A is attached as part of this request. Request approved on: October 6, 2011.

**Overall Project Outcomes and Results**

During the sixth phase of the Metro Corridors project, the Minnesota Land Trust worked with landowners throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area to permanently protect important lands and Minnesota's remaining natural areas. Three perpetual conservation easements were completed that collectively protected 317 acres of land and more than 4,300 feet of shoreline, exceeding the grant obligations by 167 acres. Two easements were purchased, both as bargain sales; one easement was donated. All three projects were unique opportunities to protect high quality natural habitat and riparian areas. These projects include:

- Sunrise Lake (Barnes): A 79-acre property of mixed hardwood and conifer forest, wetland, grassland and agricultural field in close proximity to Carlos Avery WMA in Chisago County.
- Tennyson Lake (Barrett): A 158-acre property in Isanti County comprising wetlands, mixed hardwood and pine forest, open water, grasslands, and agricultural land, with 4,375 feet of undeveloped shoreline on Tennyson Lake and Spencer Brook.
- Rush River (Amberson): A 79-acre property comprising open fields, wooded bluffs, sloping ravines, and lowland forest adjacent to the Minnesota River and Rush River County Park in Sibley County.

Baseline property reports were prepared for each easement, detailing the condition of the property for future monitoring and enforcement. LCCMR provided \$55,500 in grant funds to the Land Trust's dedicated Stewardship and Enforcement Fund for this required perpetual obligation. \$45,000 was for the three new projects under this phase of the Metro Corridors project, while \$10,500 was for an easement project from the previous phase of the Metro Corridors project. The Land Trust will report to LCCMR annually on both the status of the Stewardship and Enforcement Fund and the easements acquired with funds through this grant.

Total appraised value for the two purchased easements was \$267,000, with the grant providing \$209,080; donated value of these bargain sales was \$57,920. No appraisal was completed for the donated easement. The cost to the State of Minnesota to complete these projects was \$801 per acre. Cumulatively, across all phases of the Metro Corridors program, the Land Trust has protected 3,989 acres of critical habitat and 80,000 feet of shoreline, at a cost to the State of \$453 per acre. The Land Trust's work on this project demonstrates the continued cost effectiveness of using conservation easements to protect natural and scenic resources within developed and developing areas, as the cost to the State was well below the cost to purchase land in the Twin Cities region.

#### IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

##### ACTIVITY 1: Protect Significant Habitat through Conservation Easements

###### Description:

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. All potential easement projects are evaluated for habitat value (quality and quantity of existing habitat on site), context (proximity and relationship to other protected lands), opportunity/threat (which landowners will participate now), and other benefits (meeting multiple objectives, including visual and physical access, forestry goals, water quality, etc.). 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.

###### Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

**ENRTF Budget: \$ 400,000.00**  
**Amount Spent: \$ 335,693.96**  
**Balance: \$ 64,306.04**

###### Activity Completion Date:

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
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, 2015	\$ 400,000

###### Activity Status as of February 1, 2012:

Activity on this grant has not yet commenced.

**Activity Status as of August 1, 2012:**

The Land Trust completed one project in June 2012 as part of our Phase 5 Supplemental (2010) MeCC grant. Because we did use some 2011 funds for Stewardship and Enforcement, the project is described below; however all deliverables have been included in our 2010 final report.

Additionally, we are requesting to amend our project list to include one new project. The project, which lies adjacent to Wood-Rill SNA, is further described on the attached Project Summaries document. Request to add project approved: August 2, 2012.

**Completed Projects:**

Project: Emmans Farm, Anoka County

Description: Located in the City of St. Francis, this 80-acre property is adjacent to an additional 80-acre parcel protected in 2005 by the same family. The property is comprised of a mix of wetland types interspersed with hardwood forest, supporting a large array of terrestrial and aquatic species. Additionally, the property lies in a regionally significant ecological area as identified by the MN DNR.

The easement prohibits residential use and division of the property. Agricultural use is limited to a very small portion of the property where it currently occurs and will no longer be allowed following any future restoration of that area.

The Land Trust purchased this easement for \$80,000, a price below the fair-market value of \$192,000. Funds for the purchase price came from 2010 ENRTF funding. \$13,000 of ENRTF funds (\$2,500 from 2010 and \$10,500 from 2011) was used to cover easement monitoring, management, and enforcement.

**Activity Status as of February 1, 2013:**

The Land Trust continues working on approximately 12 potential projects. Special emphasis is on the following two projects that we anticipate will be completed within the next few months:

- Carnelian Creek (previously referred to as Wilder Forest): 38 acres, Washington County  
The Land Trust is working with the landowners on a donated conservation easement that will protect the high quality natural communities of oak forest on the property which have been mapped by the Minnesota County Biological Survey as a site of high biodiversity significance.
- Wood-Rill: 16 acres, Goodhue County  
The Land Trust is working with the landowners on a donated conservation easement that will protect the natural communities of hardwood forest and wetlands on the property, as well as a palustrine open water pond that connects with Wood-Rill SNA to the south. The entire southern line of the property borders Wood-Rill SNA.

Additionally, the Land Trust has been pursuing a potential purchase of a conservation easement on a unique parcel of land on Tennyson Lake in Isanti County which contains significant native plant communities of hardwood swamp, oak-maple woodland and northern mixed cattail marsh that have been mapped by the Minnesota County Biological Survey.

**Activity Status as of August 1, 2013:**

The Land Trust continues to work on three projects we anticipate closing by the end of 2013: Tennyson Lake, Rush Lake, and Carnelian Creek. Two of these projects will be donated, and one will be a bargain purchase.



Additionally, the Land Trust has an exciting opportunity to protect a 42-acre parcel of land on Moose Lake in Wright County which not only contains significant habitat and shoreline along Moose Lake, but connects two pieces of Stanly Eddy County Park.

**Activity Status as of February 1, 2014:**

The Land Trust closed on one project during this phase of MeCC 6 and continued to pursue three additional easements while also processing additional landowner inquiries.

**Completed Projects:**

Project: Sunrise Lake, Chisago County

Description: The 79-acre Sunrise Lake (Barnes) easement is a mix of forest (30 acres), grassland (10 acres), wetland (29 acres) and agriculture (10 acres). There are three distinct wetlands on the Protected Property: the largest dominates the western half of the property (to the south and west of the residence); a second large wetland is on the very northeast end of the property and extends southeasterly; the third is a very small wetland just at the southeast corner of the property. The wetlands are surrounded by forestland which is typically older upland deciduous (hardwood-pine). Grasslands are concentrated primarily in the southeast portion of the property with a small distribution surrounding the residence in the center-north of the property. Agricultural land is in three small areas on the eastern half of the property.

The easement prohibits development and division of the property. Agricultural use is limited to a very small portion of the property where it currently occurs and will no longer be allowed following any future restoration of that area.

This easement was donated by the landowner. Funds for stewardship are being sought from the MeCC 6 grant and total \$15,000 based on the Land Trust's Stewardship Evaluation Worksheet.

**Activity Status as of August 1, 2014:**

The Land Trust closed on one project during the most recent phase of MeCC 6 and continues to pursue two additional easements.

**Completed Projects:**

Project: Tennyson Lake, Isanti County

Description: The Tennyson Lake (Barrett) tract is located in Spencer Brook Township in Isanti County. This 158-acre property consists of 78 acres of wetlands, 40 acres of mixed hardwood and pine forest, 19 acres of open water, 6 acres of woodlands, 3 acres of grassland, and 12 acres of cultivated agricultural land. The forests, grasslands and wetlands on the property can provide habitat for a variety of species in greatest conservation need, including sandhill crane, tundra swan, trumpeter swan, bald eagle, Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow, pileated woodpecker, red-headed woodpecker, black bear, and smooth green snake. Additionally, the property provides scenic views of the wooded landscape from Tennyson Drive NW.

The conservation easement limits division of the property and agricultural uses. Industrial and commercial uses are prohibited. Residential uses are limited in size and scope and confined to a building envelope. Any vegetative management and/or forest stewardship must be in accordance with a management plan approved by the Minnesota Land Trust.

The Land Trust purchased the easement for \$157,080, below the fair-market value of \$170,000. Funds for the purchase price came from ENRTF funding. ENRTF funds provided \$15,000 to cover easement monitoring, management and enforcement of the easement.

## Activity Status as of February 1, 2015:

The Land Trust closed on one project during the most recent phase of MeCC 6 and continues to pursue one additional easement.

### Completed Project:

Project: Rush River, Sibley County

Description: The Rush River tract is located in Henderson Township in Sibley County. This 79-acre property consists of 45 acres of grassland and 34 acres of hardwood and floodplain forest. The forests and grasslands on the property can provide habitat for a variety of species in greatest conservation need, including red-shouldered hawks and a number of migratory birds. The open and natural character of the property provides scenic views enjoyed by the general public from Rush River County Park, the Rush River and 316<sup>th</sup> Street.

The conservation easement limits division of the property and agricultural uses. Industrial and commercial uses are prohibited. Residential uses are limited in size and scope and confined to a building envelope. Any vegetative management and/or forest stewardship must be in accordance with a management plan approved by the Minnesota Land Trust.

The Land Trust purchased the easement for \$52,000, below the fair-market value of \$97,000. Funds for the purchase price came from ENRTF funding. ENRTF funds provided \$15,000 to cover easement monitoring, management and enforcement of the easement.

### Final Report Summary:

Under Phase VI of the Metro Conservation Corridors program, the Land Trust met project goals and exceeded acreage goals by completing three conservation easements collectively protecting 317 acres of land, and 4,375 feet of lake and stream shoreline. Acres protected by the Land Trust under this grant exceeded grant obligations by 167 acres.

Two easements were purchased, both as bargain sales; one easement was donated. All three projects were unique opportunities to protect high quality natural habitat and riparian areas. These projects include:

Project: Sunrise Lake (Barnes)

Description: The 79-acre property is located along Sunrise Lake in Chisago County and consists of mixed hardwood and conifer forest, wetland, grassland and agricultural field. The property lies in close proximity to Carlos Avery WMA. There are three distinct wetlands on the Protected Property. The property is located within the Sunrise River Watershed, where the Sunrise River has been identified as a key river reach in the State Wildlife Action Plan.

The easement was donated. The value of the easement is unknown. ENRTF funds amounting to \$15,000 were used to cover Stewardship and Enforcement on this project.

Project: Tennyson Lake (Barrett)

Description: The 158-acre property is located along Tennyson Lake in Isanti County and comprises wetlands, mixed hardwood and pine forest, open water, grasslands, and agricultural land, with 4,375 feet of undeveloped shoreline on Tennyson Lake and Spencer Brook. The forests, grasslands and wetlands on the property provide habitat for a variety of species in greatest conservation need, including sandhill crane, tundra swan, trumpeter swan, bald eagle, Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow, pileated woodpecker, red-headed woodpecker, and smooth green snake, and potentially black bear. Of the three projects completed during this phase, the Tennyson Lake project builds upon prior protection work completed under previous phases of

MeCC project work, specifically within the Rum River Watershed. The Rum River is a critical landscape previously identified by the Land Trust to focus conservation easement work. To date the Land Trust has conservation easements on 1,682 acres of land within this crucial watershed.

The value of the easement is \$170,000. The Land Trust purchased the easement for \$157,080 using funds from ENRTF. In addition, \$15,000 of ENRTF funds were used to cover Stewardship and Enforcement on this project.

Project: Rush River (Amberson)

Description: A 79-acre property is located adjacent to the Rush River and Rush River County Park in Sibley County, and comprises open fields, wooded bluffs, sloping ravines, and floodplain forest. The forests and grasslands on the property can provide habitat for a variety of species in greatest conservation need, including red-shouldered hawks and a number of migratory birds.

The value of the easement is \$97,000. The Land Trust purchased the easement for \$52,000 using funds from ENRTF. In addition, \$15,000 in ENRTF funds were used to cover Stewardship and Enforcement on this project.

Each of these three parcels were also in line with the MeCC project selection criteria:

1. Habitat: The quality and quantity of existing habitat on site; protection of riparian areas and buffering of water resources;
2. Context: Proximity and relationship to other protected lands;
3. Opportunity: Landowners are available to participate now;
4. Cost/Benefit Ratio: Maximization of amount of impact per dollar spent;
5. Other Benefits: Meeting multiple objectives, including visual and physical access, forestry goals, water quality, etc.

Baseline property reports were prepared for each easement, detailing the condition of the property for future monitoring and enforcement. LCCMR provided \$55,500 in grant funds to the Land Trust's dedicated Stewardship and Enforcement Fund for this required perpetual obligation. \$45,000 was for the three new projects under this phase of the Metro Corridors project, while \$10,500 was for an easement project from the previous phase of the Metro Corridors project. The Land Trust will report to LCCMR annually on both the status of the Stewardship and Enforcement Fund and the easements acquired with funds through this grant.

Total appraised value for the two purchased easements was \$267,000, with the grant providing \$209,080; donated value of these bargain sales was \$57,920. No appraisal was completed for the donated easement. The cost to the State of Minnesota to complete these projects was \$801 per acre.

The grant ended with \$64,306 remaining as a balance for this activity as a result of staff turnover during the course of the project.

## **ACTIVITY 2: Coordination, Mapping & Outreach**

**NOTE:** MLT's contract was amended on April 29, 2014 to combine MeCC VI - Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Cons. Easements (3.2) AND MeCC VI - 1.1 - Coordination, Mapping & Outreach. Previous Activity Status updates were submitted under separate cover, under MeCC VI - 1.1 - Coordination, Mapping & Outreach.

### **Description:**

The Minnesota Land Trust will provide coordination and leadership by convening and facilitating meetings, providing support to partners, compiling overall reports and accomplishments, and guiding strategic outreach and implementation efforts.

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:**

**ENRTF Budget: \$ 20,000**  
**Amount Spent: \$ 17,100.87**  
**Balance: \$ 2,899.13**

**Activity Completion Date:**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Budget</b>
1. Convene and facilitate quarterly meetings of the partnership to share information and coordinate work	June 30, 2014	\$ 7,500
2. Compile and submit overall partnership reports twice yearly	June 30, 2014	\$ 7,500
3. Conduct outreach to local communities and landowners with number of activities and target audiences	June 30, 2014	\$ 5,000

**Activity Status as of August 1, 2012:**

DNR continues to make refinements to the database, focusing on the partner project maps, and ensuring the partners enter data such that it can be used by DNR to map project accomplishments.

**Activity Status as of February 1, 2013:**

The DNR has not been working on the MeCC database this timeframe, but will be working with partners this spring to add in new MeCC projects from this phase to the online map as completed.

**Activity Status as of August 1, 2013:**

The DNR has begun a landscape scale analysis to help the partners prioritize worksites.

**Project Status as of February 2, 2014:**

The DNR and MLT continue to work on a landscape scale analysis to help the partners prioritize worksites. The main focus recently has been on creating detailed land cover data (MLCCS) to improve the analysis.

**Project Status as of August 1, 2014:**

The DNR and MLT continue development of a landscape-scale analysis to be used in assisting the Metro Conservation Corridors partners prioritize project sites. DNR staff has developed a preliminary MeCC Priority Analysis map for use by project partners. That product continues to be refined and GIS work is ongoing. MLCCS land cover data was added to the analysis. The preliminary map is included as an attachment to this work plan update.

**Activity Status as of February 1, 2015:**

Land Trust staff continues to convene and facilitate meetings of the partnership to share information, review and discuss project criteria, and encourage partners to coordinate efforts. Land Trust staff also assisted in the compiling of reports for this appropriation.

A new ecological analysis has recently been completed. This work entailed creating new MLCCS data, combining MLCCS data with the most recent National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD) information, and refining habitat models for the specific characteristics of the MeCC area. Results will be posted soon and will provide guidance for new MeCC focus areas.

The MeCC database at the DNR is undergoing a software update. The application has been moved over to the new software and it is currently in a testing and debugging stage. Once the system is fully upgraded, the DNR will assist the partners in entering and updating their project information in the database.

**Final Report Summary:**

The DNR began refinements to the MeCC projects database application in 2012. The updating and revision work continued through the spring of 2015. Application updating has been completed by the DNR, but it is currently not available to MeCC partners. It is estimated that the database will be up and running in September 2015 for use by the partners.

Ecological analysis to assist MeCC partners in prioritizing project sites was initiated in summer 2013. The analysis drew upon existing Minnesota Land Cover Classification System data and combined that with the most recent National Land Cover Data information to create a new layer of MLCCS data. The new MLCCS data was then used to refine habitat models for the localized characteristics of the overall MeCC area. The new data and revised habitat models will be used to provide guidance to the project partners for new MeCC focus areas to concentrate conservation efforts.

The Land Trust staff continued to convene and facilitate meetings of the partnership to share information, review and discuss project criteria, and encourage partners to coordinate efforts. Future meetings are planned, with the Land Trust continuing the coordination of partner conservation efforts in the MeCC program area as successive funding has been appropriated through a MeCC Phase VII grant. Land Trust staff also compiled MeCC Partnership reports for this appropriation.

The grant ended with \$2,899 remaining as a balance for this activity as a result of staff turnover during the course of the project.

## **V. DISSEMINATION:**

### **Description:**

The Land Trust will disseminate results in our publications and on our web page. We will work to publicize completed projects in the media, targeting communities in which projects are located. Additionally, we will participate when possible in broader efforts of the Metro Conservation Corridors Partnership. These efforts may include emails to people on the Embrace Open Space (EOS) database, through the EOS quarterly meetings and jointly held county meetings, and on the partnership website.

### **Status as of February 1, 2012:**

Activity on this grant has not yet commenced.

### **Status as of August 1, 2012:**

The Land Trust completed one new project in June 2012, for which we drafted a press release (attached to this report). We also publicized this project on our website and Facebook page and sent the information to LCCMR staff for publication on the ENRTF Facebook page.

**Status as of February 1, 2013:** The Land Trust has not completed any additional projects since the last update for this grant, but will continue to disseminate results as projects reach completion.

**Status as of August 1, 2013:** The Land Trust has not completed any additional projects since the last update for this grant, but will continue to disseminate results as projects reach completion.

### **Status as of February 1, 2014:**

The Land Trust completed one new project in December of 2013, for which we drafted and disseminated a press release. We also publicized this project on our website and Facebook page and sent the information to LCCMR staff for publication on the ENRTF Facebook page.

### **Status as of August 1, 2014:**

The Land Trust completed one new project in June 2014. The press release has been drafted but has not yet been disseminated. The press release will be sent to media outlets, project partners, and

shared on the Land Trust’s website and Facebook page. Information will be sent to LCCMR staff for publication on the ENRTF Facebook page.

**Status as of February 1, 2015:**

The Land Trust completed one new project in December 2014. The press release has been drafted but has not yet been disseminated (the interview with the landowner was not completed until January 2015). The press release will be sent to media outlets, project partners, and shared on the Land Trust’s website and Facebook page. Information will be sent to LCCMR staff for publication on the ENRTF Facebook page.

**Final Report Summary:**

For all three projects, the Land Trust completed press releases which were sent to local media outlets, project partners, and shared on the Land Trust’s website and Facebook page. Sunrise Lake and Tennyson Lake were also highlighted in the Land Trust’s 2014 Annual Report, which was disseminated as a 4,200-piece mailing. The portion of the annual report highlighting the two easement projects is included as an attachment to this work plan final report. The Rush River easement will be a focus of the 2015 Annual Report, which will go out in the first quarter of 2016.

**VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:**

**A. ENRTF Budget:**

<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Personnel:	\$ 70,000	Staff expenses including salaries and benefits (FICA, FUTA, SUI, worker's comp health insurance, 401 (k), etc.) 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) or contract staff for land protection project professional services, including negotiating and drafting conservation easements and/or completing easement baseline documentation.*
Easement Acquisition:	\$252,000	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.
Travel Expenses in MN:	\$ 3,000	Mileage and related travel expenses in Minnesota. \$2700 for mileage reimbursement estimated at \$0.50 per mile and \$300 for meals.
Conservation Easement Monitoring and Enforcement Fund:	\$ 75,000	Funds dedicated to perpetually monitoring and enforcing 4-5 easements acquired and held by the Land Trust as needed. Estimated at \$15,000 per easement.
MeCC Partnership Mapping, Coordination and Outreach	\$ 20,000	Develop up to date maps of the MeCC Corridors, convene and facilitate quarterly meetings of the partnership to share information and coordinate work, compile and submit overall partnership reports twice yearly, and conduct outreach to local communities and landowners with number of activities and target audiences.
<b>TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:</b>	<b>\$ 420,000</b>	

\*Per discussion with LCCMR staff, contract staff is included here to allow flexibility to supplement existing MLT staff capacity to complete anticipate outcomes.

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:** N/A

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$3,500:** N/A

**Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) funded with this ENRTF appropriation:** 1 for two years

**B. Other Funds:**

Although we don't anticipate any cash funds at this time, we do anticipate providing leverage through value of easements donated to the Land Trust under this project.

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
<b>Non-state</b>			
	\$	\$	
<b>State</b>			
	\$	\$	
<b>TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	

**VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:**

**A. Project 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. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:**

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.

**C. Spending History:**

Funding Source	M.L. 2005 or FY 2006-07	M.L. 2007 or FY 2008	M.L. 2008 or FY 2009	M.L. 2009 or FY 2010	M.L. 2010 or FY 2011
ENRTF – MeCC	\$230,000	\$134,000	\$225,000	\$250,000	\$485,000

**VIII. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION LIST:** N/A

**IX. MAP(S):** See Map Attachment

**X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM:** N/A

**XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted no later than February 1, 2012, August 1, 2012, February 1, 2013, August 1, 2013, February 1, 2014, August 1, 2014, and February 1, 2015. A final report and associated products will be submitted by August 1, 2015 as requested by the LCCMR.



Final Attachment A: Budget Detail for M.L. 2011 (FY 2012-13) Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Projects								
<b>Project Title:</b> MeCC VI-3.2 – Protect Significant Habitat by Acquiring Conservation Easements								
<b>Legal Citation:</b> M.L. 2011, First Special Session, Chapter 2, Article 3, Section 2, Subdivision 04i3.2								
<b>Project Manager:</b> Wayne Ostlie								
<b>M.L. 2011 (FY 2012-13) ENRTF Appropriation:</b> \$420,000								
<b>Project Length and Completion Date:</b> June 30, 2015								
<b>Date of Update:</b> 8/17/15								
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Activity 1 Budget	Amount Spent	Balance	Activity 2 Budget	Amount Spent	Balance	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM	<i>Protect Significant Habitat through Conservation Easements</i>			<i>Partnership Coordination, Mapping and Outreach</i>				
<b>Personnel (Wages and Benefits)</b> <i>Staff expenses including salaries and benefits (FICA, FUTA, SUI, worker's comp health insurance, 401 (k), etc.) 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) or contract staff for land protection project professional services, including negotiating and drafting conservation easements and/or completing easement baseline documentation.</i>	\$70,000.00	\$45,890.48	\$24,109.52	\$20,000.00	\$17,100.87	\$2,899.13	\$90,000.00	\$27,008.65
<i>MLT Conservation Staff</i>								
<i>Contract Land Protection Staff</i>								
<i>MLT Legal Staff</i>								
<i>MLT Support Staff</i>								
<b>Easement Acquisition</b> <i>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.)</i>	\$252,000.00	\$232,250.50	\$19,749.50				\$252,000.00	\$19,749.50
<b>Travel expenses in Minnesota</b> <i>Mileage and related travel expenses in Minnesota</i>	\$3,000.00	\$2,052.98	\$947.02				\$3,000.00	\$947.02
<b>Easement Monitoring &amp; Enforcement Fund</b> <i>Funds dedicated to perpetually monitoring, managing, and enforcing 4-5 easements acquired and held by the Land Trust as needed.</i>	\$75,000.00	\$55,500.00	\$19,500.00				\$75,000.00	\$19,500.00
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$400,000.00</b>	<b>\$335,693.96</b>	<b>\$64,306.04</b>	<b>\$20,000.00</b>	<b>\$17,100.87</b>	<b>\$2,899.13</b>	<b>\$420,000.00</b>	<b>\$67,205.17</b>

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
M.L. 2011 Acquisition/Restoration List  
Final**

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

Project Manager Name: Wayne Ostlie

M.L. 2011 ENRTF Appropriation: \$400,000

Restoration #	Parcel Name	Geographical		County	Ecosystem Description	Ecological Significance	Activity Description	# of Acres	Shore line	Title or Easement	Landowner Type	Status
		Latitude or UTM-X	Longitude or UTM-Y									
1	Emmans Farm	475419	5025598	Anoka	woodland, grassland, wetland, agriculture	parts of the property lie within a regionally significant ecological area, also in MCBS site of biodiversity significance	conservation easement acquisition	80		Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	Complete
2	Rum River	476605	5049201	Isanti	forest, grassland, wetland, shoreline	part of Rum River corridor - Wild and Scenic River	conservation easement acquisition	36	4,267	Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	initial contact complete
3	Rum River	479612	5051732	Isanti	forest, wetland, prairie, ponds	part of Rum River corridor - Wild and Scenic River	conservation easement acquisition	40	500	Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	initial contact complete
4	Rice Lake	437261	4980942	Carver & Wright	forest, wetland, shoreline	MCBS sugar maple forest native plant community	conservation easement acquisition	128	1,937	Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	Donation. Negotiations underway
5	Schendel Lake	447080	4994399	Hennepin	forest, wetland, agriculture	parts of the property lie within a regionally significant ecological area, undeveloped wooded shoreline along Schendel Lake	conservation easement acquisition		TBD	Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	initial contact complete
6	Lurton Park	451774	4982186	Hennepin	forest, grassland, wetland, pond	lies within a DNR regionally significant ecological area	conservation easement acquisition	30		Minnesota Land Trust	Public owner City of Orono	Donation. Initial contact complete
7	Carnelian Creek (previously referred to as "Wilder Forest")	514276	5004133	Washington	forest, woodland, wetland	MCBS oak (red maple) woodland, site of high biodiversity significance	conservation easement acquisition	38		Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	Likely donation. Initial contact complete
8	Crow River	345827	5015058	Hennepin	forest, woodland, grassland, wetland, agricultural, shoreline	undeveloped shoreline along state designated wild & scenic river, Crow River	conservation easement acquisition	97	TBD	Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	Donation. Negotiations underway
9	Trout Brook	514691	4967409	Washington	forest, woodland, grassland, shoreline	lies within a DNR regionally significant ecological area	conservation easement acquisition	35	2,812	Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	Donation. Negotiations underway
10	Oak Lake	436427	4977756	Carver	forest, grassland, wetland, shoreline	lies within a DNR regionally significant ecological area, shallow lake = DNR key habitat in state action plan	conservation easement acquisition	91	8,612	Minnesota Land Trust	Non-profit organization - Phyllis Wheatley CC	Purchase - funding source not yet identified.

12	Bullard Creek	541896	4930355	Goodhue	forest, grassland, agricultural, shoreline	undeveloped shoreline along Bullard Creek, a DNR trout stream	conservation easement acquisition	60	TBD	Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	initial contact complete
13	Wood-Rill	457189	4982025	Hennepin	Big Woods, wetland	Big Woods remnant; adjacent to Wood-Rill SNA	conservation easement acquisition	17		Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	Donation. Negotiations underway
14	Tennyson Lake	461976	5040955	Isanti	forest, grassland, wetland, agriculture, shoreline	undeveloped shoreline along Tennyson Lake and Spencer Brook, as well as four native plant communities mapped by	conservation easement acquisition	158	4,375	Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	Complete
14	Rush Lake	495625	5061833	Chisago	forest, woodland, grassland, wetland, agriculture,	undeveloped shoreline along Rush Lake	conservation easement acquisition	152	TBD	Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	Donation. Negotiations underway
15	Moose Lake	403075	5008144	Wright	forest, woodland, grassland, shoreline	undeveloped shoreline along Moose Lake, connects two pieces of Stanley-Eddy Regional Park	conservation easement acquisition	42	TBD	Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	Bargain purchase. Negotiations underway
16	Sunrise Lake	511944	5031434	Chisago	forest, woodland, grassland, wetland, agriculture, shoreline	and forested-wetlands within the Chisago Lakes complex. Close proximity to Sunrise Lake, Sunrise River and the Carlos Avery Wildlife	conservation easement acquisition	79	NA	Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	Complete
17	Rush River	427028	4928417	Sibley	grassland, forest	Undeveloped grassland, hardwood forest and floodplain forest adjacent to Rush River	conservation easement acquisition	79	NA	Minnesota Land Trust	Private landowner	Complete

NOTES: The above list includes projects the Minnesota Land Trust currently is considering. Other projects may be added to the list as new landowners are contacted. Some projects on the list will n

**Metro Conservation Corridors  
Phase VI**  
MINNESOTA LAND TRUST COMPLETED PROJECTS



Tennyson Lake



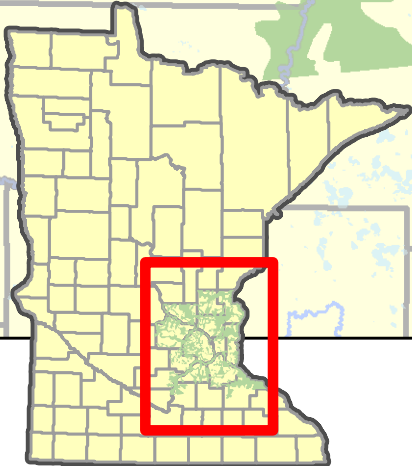
Sunrise Lake



Rush River



0 10 20  
Miles



-  Metro Conservation Corridors
-  Minnesota Land Trust Completed Projects



## Minnesota Land Trust Completed Projects

### LCCMR Metro Corridors 2011 - Phase VI

**Rush River:** This 79-acre property is located within Sibley County. The property consists of a mixture of open fields, wooded bluffslands, sloping ravines, and lowland forest near the river. The lowland forest on the south side of the property has been mapped by the Minnesota County Biological Survey as a site of moderate biodiversity significance by the DNR. The property lies adjacent to Rush River County Park, which is to the south and west. The property is located one mile east of Minnesota Valley State Recreational Area, and is within a five-mile radius of three wildlife management areas and four other Minnesota Land Trust conservation easements.

**Sunrise Lake:** This 79-acre property in Chisago County consists of mixed hardwood forest and coniferous forest, wetlands, grasslands, and approximately 10 acres of row crop agriculture. It is in close proximity to the Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area. While there are no known adjacent landowners interested in a conservation easement at present, the Sunrise River could become an important complex and priority area for the Land Trust similar to Valley Creek in Washington County. The property is located within the Sunrise River Watershed, where the Sunrise River has been identified as a key river reach in the State Wildlife Action Plan.

**Tennyson Lake:** This 158-acre property in Isanti County is comprised of a combination of wetlands, mixed hardwood and pine forest, open water, woodlands, grassland, and 12 acres of cultivated agricultural land. The Protected Property also includes approximately 2,990 linear feet of undeveloped riparian shoreline on Tennyson Lake and 1,385 linear feet of riparian shoreline along Spencer Brook. Rare habitats including oak and pine forest interspersed with grassland, sedge meadow, tamarack swamp, and cattail marsh are found on the property and have been mapped by the Minnesota County Biological Survey as a site of moderate biodiversity significance by the DNR. The property is located approximately one and a half miles southwest of one of the Land Trust's Rum River conservation easements. The Tennyson Lake project builds upon prior protection work completed under previous phases of MeCC project work, specifically within the Rum River Watershed. The Rum River is a critical landscape previously identified by the Land Trust to focus conservation easement work. To date the Land Trust has conservation easements on 1,682 acres of land within this crucial watershed. Seven other conservation easements within approximately an eight-mile radius of the property are held by the Land Trust. The property is also approximately two miles northwest of the MN DNR Crooked Lake Wildlife Management Area.

# MINNESOTA LAND TRUST

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## "BIG WOODS" NOW PROTECTED FOREVER



Landowners Marjorie and Darrell Amberson, with Project Manager Maggie Karschnia.

Darrell and Marjorie Amberson recently realized a dream come true: permanently preserving their 79 acres along the north side of the Rush River in Sibley County, a few miles north of Le Seuer.

Their land lies within the Big Woods Ecological Subsection of the state. Historically, the predominant vegetation was hardwood forest, including red oak, sugar maple and American elm. Today, only a small fraction of the "Big Woods" forests remain.

The Amberson's land includes grassland as well; both the hardwood forest and the grassland provides exceptional habitat for many species of wildlife and migratory birds. Coyote, bald eagles and deer are frequent visitors to the land, which lies adjacent to the 285-acre Sibley County Rush River Park, thus creating a 364-acre complex of wildlife habitat.

Darrell early memories were formed from fishing trips with his grandfather as a boy. Later, Darrell and Marjorie both lived in Carver County and began to see the effects of urban sprawl. Before long, they began their search for acreage that would give them room to spread out.

It was love at first sight: next to a park, it had beautiful bluffs, rolling hills, open & wooded areas.

The Ambersons were inspired to contact the Minnesota Land Trust because, as they researched options, it seemed to line up with what they had envisioned for their land.

Darrell put it this way: "The easement restrictions described the way we were going to take care of our land anyway, and it's good to perpetuate what we had intended to do with the land."

Funding for this project was provided by members of the Minnesota Land Trust and by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR).

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### Minnesota Land Trust

2356 University Avenue West, Suite 240

Saint Paul, MN 55114

Telephone: (651) 647-9590

1-877-MLT-LAND

Located on the Green Line, near Randolph Station

General email inquiries: [mnland@mnland.org](mailto:mnland@mnland.org)

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## SANDHILL CRANES AND OTHER WILDLIFE ASSURED HABITAT FOREVER

Lindstrom landowner Joan Barnes once fought for the rights of a resident beaver in the Minnesota Supreme Court – and won. Now she has taken her passion for conservation to a different level by protecting her 79-acre property from development forever.

Joan has reason for concern. From 2000 to 2010 the population of Chisago County increased over 30 percent, with increasing competition for limited space between landowners and wildlife. The beavers who won their right to maintain their den in wetlands on Joan's property are now gone, trapped by neighbors. While Joan no longer finds beaver on her property, she does see bear, fox, grouse and sandhill cranes.



Landowner Joan Barnes signs documents that create a lasting legacy in the form of a conservation easement for her property near Lindstrom.



The shallow wetlands on Joan's property are part of a major migratory route for waterfowl and songbirds.

The natural and undisturbed forests, grasslands and wetlands of this property create attractive habitat to support a wide range of species such as bald eagle, common tern, osprey, wood turtle, trumpeter swan, yellow rails and sharp-tailed sparrow. It is part of a major migratory corridor for waterbirds and serves as one of the state's most critical areas for spotted salamander and other amphibians.

"We're fortunate to be able to

protect quality of habitat so close to the metro area," says Kris Larson, Executive Director of the Minnesota Land Trust adding, "This is not only a great legacy for the landowners, it is also a very wise—and cost effective—investment by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund with tremendous benefits for migratory birds and other wildlife."

Funding for the project was made possible by members of the Minnesota Land Trust and through the Metro Conservation Corridors, a project funded by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Natural Resources and approved by the legislature.



Joan regularly sees bear, fox, turkeys, grouse and sandhill cranes on her property despite being surrounded by explosive residential growth.

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THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS WERE FUNDED BY LAND TRUST MEMBERS AND WITH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND AS RECOMMENDED BY THE LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON MINNESOTA RESOURCES (LCCMR).



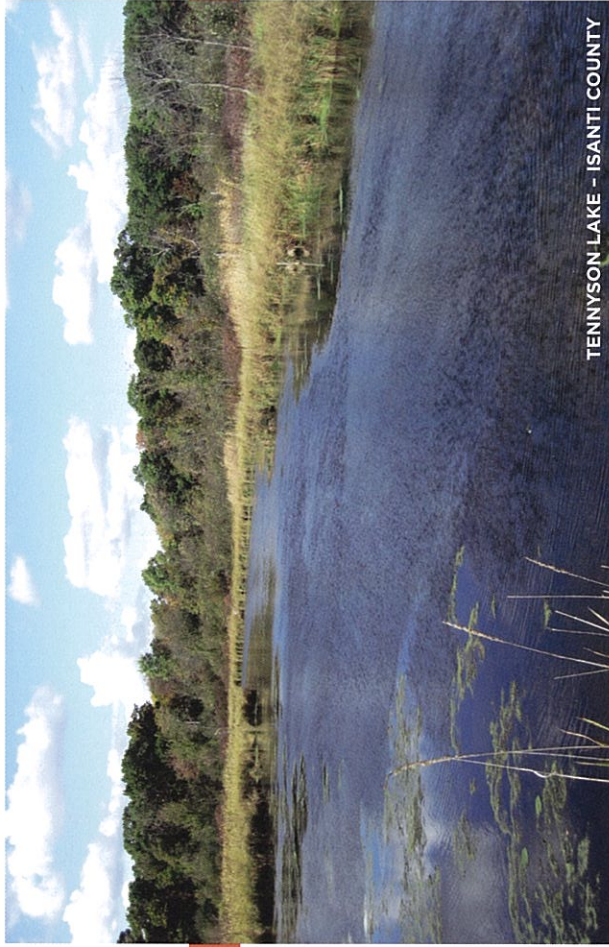
SUNRISE LAKE - CHISAGO COUNTY

**FISCHER LAKES - BECKER COUNTY**

Three generations of one family have protected their 475-acre Century Farm, located in a very important migratory area for forest birds and waterfowl. Wildlife species documented on the property include several species of greatest conservation need: trumpeter swan, prairie chicken, sandhill crane, great blue heron, bald eagle, sharp-tailed grouse, and upland sandpiper. Over 18,000 feet of shoreline along five lakes, as well as remnant oak savannah, prairie and forest located adjacent to the city of Frazee are protected forever.

**SUNRISE LAKE - CHISAGO COUNTY**

The forests, grasslands and wetlands on this 79-acre property provide habitat for a variety of species in greatest conservation need, including the wood turtle, trumpeter swan and spotted salamander.



TENNYSON LAKE - ISANTI COUNTY

**BLACK LAKE - BELTRAMI COUNTY**

This 145-acre property consisting of forest, wetlands, and grasslands also includes over 10,000 feet of shoreline. The mosaic of forest, wetlands and grasslands support bald eagles, northern goshawks, great gray owls, red-shouldered hawks, black-backed woodpeckers, gray wolves, loons, and other species of greatest conservation need.

**TENNYSON LAKE - ISANTI COUNTY**

Over 4,300 feet of sensitive shoreline are protected on this 158-acre property. Rare habitats including sedge meadow, tamarack swamp, and cattail marsh are found on the property. The land provides significant habitat for species in greatest conservation need, supporting such species as sandhill crane, tundra swan, trumpeter swan, bald eagle, Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow, pileated woodpecker, red-headed woodpecker, black bear, and smooth green snake.