



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2014 Work Plan

Date of Report: January 13, 2014
Date of Next Status Update Report: January 1, 2015
Date of Work Plan Approval:
Project Completion Date: June 30, 2015
Does this submission include an amendment request? No

PROJECT TITLE: Shoreland Acquisition on St. Croix River

Project Manager: June Mathiowetz
Organization: Washington County
Mailing Address: 14949 62nd Street North, P.O. Box 6
City/State/Zip Code: Stillwater, MN 55082-0006
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Location: Washington County

Total ENRTF Project Budget:	ENRTF Appropriation:	\$1,250,000
	Amount Spent:	\$0
	Balance:	\$1,250,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2014, Chp. 226, Sec. 2, Subd. 07d

Appropriation Language:

\$1,250,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Washington County to purchase 15 acres, encompassing 3,500 feet of St. Croix shoreland paralleling Brown's Creek State Trail in the city of Stillwater. The county will transfer the parcel to the city of Stillwater. This appropriation is contingent on the expenditure of at least \$2,500,000 of nonstate match.

I. PROJECT TITLE: 3500-foot Shoreland Acquisition on St. Croix River

II. PROJECT STATEMENT:

Washington County is partnering with the City of Stillwater to acquire 15 acres with 3,500 feet of frontage on the St. Croix River to preserve the ecological integrity of and increase the public access to the St. Croix River. This property is just north of downtown Stillwater and parallels the Brown's Creek State Trail. The property is within the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway District and is one of the longest stretches of St. Croix River frontage remaining in single ownership in Washington County. The city will own and manage the land as a nature park serving trail users, river users, tourists and area residents. The city will restore the property to a natural condition and offer passive recreational uses such as shore fishing, transient dockage, walk-in boat launching, walking paths, nature observation, picnicking and trail access. The requested funds will provide a match to local funds. Both local and state funding is needed and is appropriate for this acquisition because of its high cost as St. Croix River property; its importance in protecting the scenic and ecological values of the St. Croix River, a state-designated resource; its use as a state trail amenity that will enhance the user experience; and its ability to serve the recreational needs of a national, state and local clientele.

Although this new park will provide additional public access and recreational opportunities to the St. Croix River and a much needed rest area at the terminus of the Brown's Creek State Trail neither the National Park Service (NPS) nor the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is interested in owning the property. The NPS cannot own the property because it is located outside the National Scenic Riverway District boundary and within the state-managed portion of the riverway district. The DNR currently owns enough land to build the state trail. Both agencies are supportive of this acquisition and will be involved in preparing the master plan.

Washington County has adopted a Conservation Priorities Plan and site evaluation criteria that aid the county in being strategic in choosing land protection that is most critical and maximizes the ecological benefits of public funds. The county's priorities are to acquire interests in land for recreation; adjacent to waterways, and recreational facilities; serving multiple public purposes; and providing public access. A citizen advisory committee rated this acquisition as very high for meeting program goals and priorities and recommended its purchase.

This proposal addresses two of the habitat recommendations in the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan. First, it addresses the Habitat Recommendation #2 to protect critical shore lands of streams and lakes such as the St. Croix River. The purchase and subsequent restoration will enhance the scenic and ecological values of the St. Croix River. The St. Croix River is one of the most pristine large river ecosystems in the Upper Midwest; none-the-less it is impacted by nutrient and sediment pollution. In 2008, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency designated Lake St. Croix, the lower 25 miles of the St. Croix River, as an impaired water due to high levels of phosphorus. If left unprotected, this property could be developed into 9 single-family residential lots that with their lawns and impervious surfaces would create additional nutrient and sediment loading to the river. Replacing development with a corridor of natural vegetation on this property that has steep slopes, ground water seeps and highly erodible soils will help to defray pollution impacts and will aid in arresting the decline in the water quality in the St. Croix River. It will also aid in maintaining a high quality river fishery that is dependent on the clean waters of the St. Croix River.

This acquisition also addresses the Habitat Recommendation #3 to improve connectivity and access to outdoor recreation. Restoration of this property will expand an existing corridor of natural lands along the St. Croix River to the north and Brown's Creek Trout Stream to the west that are permanently protected through fee ownership by the DNR and the NPS and conservation easements held by the NPS. This expanded corridor will increase the breeding and migratory habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and neo-tropical migrants that use the St. Croix River as a major flyway. The property's location adjacent to the Brown's Creek State Trail, its proximity to downtown Stillwater, and its shoreland length make it a unique acquisition and a highly desirable destination

for recreational pursuits. In particular, its low elevation makes it suitable for shore fishing, a recreational activity that is limited along the lower St. Croix River due to the prevalence of high banks and shoreland bluffs. A man-made pond fed by ground water seeps on the north end of the property will be retained and will be stocked with trout to provide additional fishing opportunities. Public acquisition and the planned subsequent removal of the home and restoration of the turf and invasive species to a more natural condition will have positive impacts on the river environment such as improved ecological diversity and ecosystem connectivity; increased breeding and migratory habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and neo-tropical migrants; and better filtering and storage of storm and flood waters.

This acquisition will address a need identified by the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan to make more effort to protect some of the remaining undeveloped lake and river shoreline for public access and outdoor recreation use and to protect outdoor recreation land close to where people live. This acquisition would create a nearly two-mile stretch of public riverfront along the St. Croix River in Stillwater offering a future recreational opportunity unparalleled in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

The landowner is elderly and is seeking to sell her property. For a limited time she is willing to negotiate for public ownership before she markets it for development. The county will negotiate for a purchase agreement that is contingent on receiving matching funds.

III. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of January 1, 2015:
Overall Project Outcomes and Results:

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: Protect Significant Shoreland through Land Acquisition

Description:

The county will acquire a 15-acre parcel including 3,500 feet of frontage on the St. Croix River. An appraisal has been completed and has presented an offer to the landowner. The county hopes to have a signed purchase agreement by the end of 2014.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$1,250,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$1,250,000

Activity Completion Date:

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. Acquire 15 acres and 3,500 feet of frontage on the St. Croix River and the Brown's Creek State Trail.	June 30, 2015	\$1,250,000

Activity Status as of January 1, 2015:

Final Report Summary:

V. DISSEMINATION:

Description: None anticipated.

Status as of January 1, 2015:

Final Report Summary:

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. ENRTF Budget Overview:

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Explanation
Fee Title Acquisition:	\$ 1,250,000	Acquire 15 acres. Fee title will be held by the City of Stillwater.
TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:	\$ 1,250,000	

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: NA

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000: NA

Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation: NA

Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation: NA

B. Other Funds:

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
Non-state			
County Land and Water Legacy Funds	\$ 1,925,000	\$	Fee title acquisition.
City of Stillwater	\$ 500,000		Fee title acquisition
Additional Non-state Funds	\$ 325,000		Fee title acquisition
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:	\$ 2,788,000	\$	

VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners:

- Washington County will receive the grant funds and will carry out the acquisition work. Because the county is contributing a large amount of the funds, the county will retain an interest in the property in the form of a permanent conservation easement before conveying the property to the city.
- The City of Stillwater will fund and implement a restoration and natural resource management plan and own and manage the property as a natural park.
- City and county staff will work with other key stakeholders including the DNR and the National Park Service to prepare a park master plan after the property is acquired.
- The Washington Conservation District staff will assist in preparing a restoration and natural resource management plan.
- None of the partners will receive any grant funds.

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:

Subsequent to the purchase and before conveying the property to the city Washington County will record a conservation easement in the county’s favor over the property. This easement will assure permanent protection by prohibiting land uses that negatively affect the river and its shoreland habitat. Washington County will monitor the property on an annual basis and will take necessary enforcement action to ensure that the development and use of the property is consistent with the terms of the conservation easement and the management and restoration plans. Subsequent to its purchase, the county and city will work with partners to restore the property to a more natural condition using native species in accordance with the restoration plan. Additional grants will be sought from appropriate sources to fund the restoration activities in a timely manner.

C. Spending History:

Funding Source	M.L. 2008 or FY09	M.L. 2009 or FY10	M.L. 2010 or FY11	M.L. 2011 or FY12-13	M.L. 2013 or FY14
Appraisal				\$10,000	
Phase I, title review and other due diligence					\$3,000

VIII. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION LIST: See attached list.

IX. VISUAL ELEMENT or MAP(S): See attached map.

X. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION REQUIREMENTS WORKSHEET: See attached Acquisition/Restoration Requirements Worksheet.

XI. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: NA

XII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted no later than January 1, 2015, and July 30, 2015. A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2015.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund					
M.L. 2014 Project Budget					
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Project Manager: June Mathiowetz					
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M.L. 2014 ENRTF Appropriation: \$1,250,000					
Project Length and Completion Date: 1 Year, June 30, 2015					
Date of Report: January 13, 2014					



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Activity 1 Budget	Amount Spent	Activity 1 Balance	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM	<i>Fill in your activity title here.</i>				
Fee Title Acquisition <i>(Specify an estimated number of parcels and acreage and who will hold the title to the land(s) acquired.)</i>	\$1,250,000		\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000
COLUMN TOTAL	\$1,250,000	\$0	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2014 Acquisition/Restoration List

Project Title: 3500-foot Shoreland Acquisition on St. Croix River

Legal Citation:

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#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	Geographic Coordinates Format: [Deg.]° [Min.]' [Sec.]" [Hemis.]		Estimated Cost	Estimated Annual PILT Liabilities	County	Ecological Significance	Activity Description	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)	Status
		Latitude	Longitude										
1	Aiple	45° 04' 7.4781" N	92° 48' 19.4506" W	\$4,000,000	\$ -	Washington	St. Croix River shoreland - riverine floodplain	fee title acquisition	15	0.66	private	City of Stillwater	engaged in landowner negotiations

NOTES:

Washington County
St. Croix River Shoreland Acquisition
Aiple Property

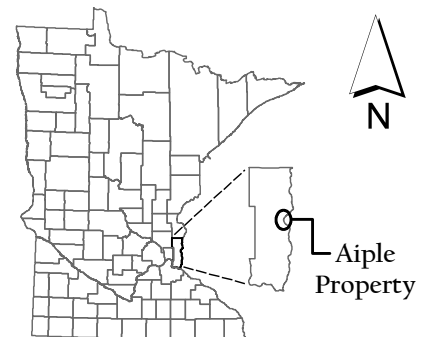


Scale: 1 inch = 600 feet

Date of Aerial Photography:
Spring 2011

prepared by:

Washington County Public Works Department
Survey and Land Management Division



Project Location Map
Subd. 07d
No Scale