

**Washington County St. Croix River Land Protection**

**Request for Funding Form  
Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
Fiscal Year 2011**

**Program or Project Title: #7 Washington County St. Croix River Land Protection**

**Date: October 27, 2009**

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Funds Requested (\$000s)	Council Funding Request	Out-Year Projections of Needs		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Outdoor Heritage Fund	<b>\$4,000,000</b>	0	0	0

**A. Summary**

Washington County seeks to preserve the ecological integrity of the St. Croix River, designated as a resource of statewide and national importance. This proposal will help the LSOHC achieve its Priority Action #2: Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the ... St. Croix Rivers. Washington County will complete 4-6 permanent conservation easements or fee title acquisitions to permanently protect up to 400 acres of critical habitat needed to support a variety of "Species in Greatest Conservation Need", including over one mile of St. Croix River shoreline. These projects are located in Denmark Township within the state St. Croix Scenic Riverway District and are the remaining large lots along the lowest stretch of the St. Croix River. These properties are the critical connections needed to complete a permanently-protected 3-mile continuous corridor of forested bluff lands and ravines along the Lower St. Croix River. Through related fee acquisitions they will provide for public access near the St. Croix River. The LSOHC's contribution will be used to match county property tax dollars approved through a 2006 voter referendum. Since the St. Croix River has statewide significance it is appropriate for both state and local funds to be used to protect the qualities that make the river worthy of its status as a national Scenic River. Both local and state funding will be needed to complete these acquisitions to protect land that is very expensive and in high demand for residential development. The economic recession has given us a rare opportunity to protect these properties and to accomplish outstanding habitat objectives for the State of Minnesota.

**B. Background Information**

**1. What is the problem or opportunity being addressed?**

**OPPORTUNITY TO SAVE A TREASURE: The St. Croix River and its watershed is a national treasure and vital community asset.** The river provides clean water, high quality natural ecosystems, striking geologic features, beautiful scenery, and abundant recreation opportunities. The watershed is considered one of the most

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biologically diverse rivers in the Upper Mississippi River basin. Its sloughs and backwaters, as well as the relatively intact vegetation along its banks, are home to a rich variety of native and endangered species and habitat. Its waters support 95 fish species and approximately 38 mussel species, many of which are on the state- and federally-endangered species lists, making it one of the premier mussel habitats in the world. Its forested lands are nesting habitat for Bald Eagles and home to several threatened and endangered species such as the peregrine falcon and the Karner blue butterfly.

A diverse number of birds, including a significant number of bird species of greatest conservation concern and special interest, depend upon the St. Croix River and adjacent riparian and upland habitats in Denmark Township. High numbers of bald eagles forage, roost and nest along this stretch of river; red-shouldered hawks are common; Louisiana water thrushes are common as they reach their northern limit a bit farther upstream; and prothonotary warblers, a species of conservation concern are frequently found breeding here in the northern limit of their range. Stewardship of the golden-winged warbler, found here in significant numbers, is a special responsibility as 40% of its entire population is within Minnesota. Other species of conservation concern found here include the whip-poor-will, tufted titmouse, blue-winged warbler, cerulean warbler, black-throated blue warbler, mourning warbler, worm-eating warbler, Kentucky warbler and hooded warbler.

This habitat is particularly critical as it provides a natural north-south migratory corridor containing stretches of upland deciduous forests for many species of interest and concern to Minnesota. The annual breeding bird survey and other observations report that many of these bird species have declined over 60 - 80% nationally in the past 40 years. Providing larger tracts of unfragmented, high-quality upland forest habitats along riparian corridors is critical to their long-term survival. The St. Croix River south of Stillwater is a candidate for the Audubon Society's designation as an Important Bird Area; the stretch of river from Stillwater to Taylor's Falls is already designated.

In 1968, Congress recognized the outstanding characteristics of the St. Croix River when it designated the river as one of the first eight rivers to be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations under the federal Wild and Scenic River Act. The Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway was designated by the State of Minnesota in 1972. The states of MN and WI, in partnership with local units of government, are the principal stewards that have been entrusted to safeguard the qualities that make the St. Croix River a national treasure.

**PROBLEM OF GROWTH AND LAND USE: Despite these special designations, the St. Croix River is a threatened resource.** The primary threat is future development and fragmented management. Although the St. Croix River Basin is one of the most pristine large river ecosystems in the Upper Midwest 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 river, as an "impaired water" due to high levels of phosphorus. This classification mandates the creation of a comprehensive plan to ensure the reduction of all key pollutants and mandates that the federal, state and local governments create policies and take actions to ensure its recovery.

Increasing urbanization in the watershed will make it increasingly more difficult to protect the St. Croix River from additional nutrient and sediment loading that will come with growth. In 2009 American Rivers identified the Lower St. Croix River as one of America's most endangered rivers due to increased growth pressures and poorly controlled development. It is anticipated that 47,778 new households will be added to Washington County between 2007 and 2030, a 50% increase. Many of them will locate in desirable places such as the St. Croix River. As development increases and the rural nature of the river is transformed the high quality land and water habitats will be permanently altered. Land use within two miles of the proposed projects is heavily dominated by agriculture and rural residential development. The land immediately adjacent to the St. Croix River, however, is mostly wooded and is highly sought after for residential development.

**THE ST. CROIX RIVER CAN BE PROTECTED. The State of Minnesota has a rare opportunity to assist Washington County in protecting the wooded habitat along the St. Croix River.** For a limited time, several riparian landowners have offered to work with the county to keep their land in its natural state. These projects include some of the few remaining large parcels and sensitive natural areas along the Lower St. Croix River.

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With these projects the county will preserve wildlife habitat, provide riverbank stability, and protect water quality. Maintaining mature forests along the shoreline at the project sites can help to defray pollution impacts from other parts of the watershed and also contribute to the quality of the wildlife habitat. Specifically, the proposed acquisitions will preserve and protect, in perpetuity, the following conservation values:

- Preserve a continuous three-mile ecological corridor along the Lower St. Croix River providing riparian and upland habitat for many wildlife and bird species of greatest conservation need;
- Preserve remnants of mesic oak forest, a plant community that is considered imperiled in the state due to its rarity, and one of the most important features of these sites;
- Preserve the water quality and avoid additional nutrient loading and other negative impacts to Lake St. Croix, a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency-designated impaired water body;
- Protect soil stability and improve the quality of the overland flow of water into the St. Croix River;
- Maintain recharge of water into groundwater aquifers;
- Protect drinking water supplies from contamination in an area that has a very high sensitivity to groundwater contamination; and
- Provide a natural buffer to and maintain scenic vistas from the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, the St. Croix Scenic Byway, the St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park and the future St. Croix Valley Regional Trail.

The proposed acquisitions will help meet the goals of several landscape-scale conservation plans and will address the habitat recommendations in the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan. See Section C for more detail.

### **2. What action will be taken?**

Washington County will provide at least 50% of the cost to complete 4-6 conservation easement and fee acquisitions within the St. Croix River watershed. The projects are described in Section K. Washington County will hold the interests in the land that it acquires. The scarcity of land for development and the increasing suburban development nearby has made St. Croix Riverfront land extremely expensive. Multiple funding sources will be needed to protect this critical habitat. The county is seeking to match up to 50% of the project cost from outside sources. Some landowners have offered to donate some of the value of their project. Management plans recommending activities to restore and improve the ecological functions of the property will be prepared for each acquisition. With receipt of the state funds, the projects will be completed within 12-18 months.

### **3. Who will take action and when?**

Washington County will carry out the majority of the proposed work. The county works with other organizations to take advantage of their expertise, strengths and unique tools. Washington Conservation District, Belwin Conservancy, and Friends of the Mississippi are under contract to develop the required management plans and are available to assist with restoration and enhancement activities. Carpenter Nature Center is involved in a long-term strategy of managing and restoring the land it owns in the corridor. The Minnesota Land Trust will provide advice on drafting high quality conservation easements.

### **4. How will you coordinate this program with the other Constitutional Funding?**

Washington County has not received other Constitutional Funding but would be willing to coordinate its work with any agencies that receive funds for land protection projects along the St. Croix River.

### **5. What specific habitat changes will occur if this item is funded? Be specific about and list multiple benefits if they exist.**

Although these acquisitions are being pursued because of the high quality of the existing habitat, some restoration will occur. Specifically, cropland will be restored to prairie and oak savannah, one of the most threatened natural communities in North America. This will create habitat for a wide array of songbirds as well as a variety of game and other wildlife species.

### **6. When do you expect to see these habitat changes?**

The management plans will lay out a 1-5 year schedule for implementation of the recommendations.

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**7. Will your Outdoor Heritage Fund dollar request complete the planned accomplishments?**

YES  NO

**If not, how will you finance completion?**

Yes, if fully funded. If partially funded, the accomplishments will be reduced until other funds can be secured.

**8. How will you pay for the maintenance of the accomplishments?**

Washington County funds the operational costs of the Land and Water Legacy Program through general county levy dollars, including annual monitoring and enforcement of the conservation easements.

**9. How does this action directly restore, enhance, or protect prairies, wetlands, forests or habitat for fish, game, and wildlife?**

The long-term, protection of these properties will be assured through conservation easements held by Washington County. The conservation easement will preserve and protect, in perpetuity, the conservation values of the property by confining development, management and use of the properties to activities that are consistent with preservation of conservation values (See Section B.1.).

Although these acquisitions are being pursued because of the high quality of the existing habitat, some improvements are needed to restore and improve the ecological function of the sites. Each acquisition requires the preparation of a natural resources management plan. The main goal of each plan is to protect and improve, where needed, the biological diversity and ecological quality and functions of the natural communities. Specific activities include such things as removing exotic brush, converting cropland areas to native prairie and savanna, installing additional soil erosion control measures, avoiding disturbing highly erodible soils, avoiding disturbing vegetation in areas with high abundance of native and unusual plant species, conduct breeding bird surveys, and adjust beach grading to minimize impact to nesting turtles. The county will negotiate with each landowner to implement the recommendations.

**10. If you are restoring or enhancing property, is the activity on permanently protected land?**

YES  NO

**If yes briefly describe the kind of protection.**

All the land purchased in fee will be owned and managed by the county. All conservation easements that are purchased will be permanent. Some restoration will be required where critical to protecting the public values for which the conservation easement was purchased.

**11. How will you ensure transparency and provide information about your work and use of Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars?**

Washington County will submit quarterly reports to the LSOHC showing progress toward the stated goals. Successes will be well publicized in the local media and on the county's website.

**12. Why will this strategy work?**

The owners of each parcel applied to the Washington County Land and Water Legacy Program and are willing sellers. After being screened for relevance and excellence against the site evaluation criteria, their projects were chosen as having the highest priority. The type of project being proposed takes a long time to complete. Much of the 'spade' work (project scope, due diligence, appraisals, etc.) has been done to get the land ready to be acquired. The projects are ready to go and will be able to be completed quickly after matching funds are secured.

**13. Who might make decisions that assist or work against achieving the expected impact program?**

The county has received letters of support for these acquisitions from the National Park Service, Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota, St. Croix River Association, St. Croix Scenic Byway, St. Croix Scenic Coalition, and Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center. Denmark Township is concerned about the long-term tax impacts of restricting development on a large amount of high value residential land. To mitigate the impacts of land acquisition, Washington County makes in-lieu of tax payments when there is a taxable use of the acquired land such as farming or house rental.

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14. If this is acquisition of land, has the local government formally approved the acquisition?

YES  NO

15. If this is fee simple acquisition of land, is the land free of any other permanent protection such as a conservation easement?

YES  NO

16. If this is an easement acquisition, will the eased land be open for public use?

YES  NO

If Yes what kind of use?

Opportunities will be available subject to negotiation with the private landowner. For example, landowners allow hunting and fishing on the property with prior permission. As a separate, coordinated purchase, Washington County will acquire in fee the right of way needed to complete a 2.5 mile segment of the proposed St. Croix Valley Regional Trail linking parks and natural areas along the St. Croix River from Afton south to Prescott. The easement acquisitions will provide buffer to this trail. The fee acquisitions are not included in this proposal but are mentioned to document the additional public value associated with the proposed easement acquisitions.

17. If easement acquisition, will the easement be a permanent conservation easement as described in MS 2009, Chapter 84C.01, specifically protecting the natural resource values of real property forever?

YES  NO

18. If you are proposing funding for a new or ongoing program how long into the future do you expect this program to operate?

These acquisitions are part of the Washington County Land and Water Legacy Program. Washington County has completed or participated in seven projects protecting 200 acres of land since 2000 when it began its private land protection activities. The county accelerated its efforts and established its Land and Water Legacy Program (LWLP) in 2007 after voters approved a \$20 million bond referendum to acquire interests in property for the preservation of water quality, woodlands and other natural areas. With this new funding, the county has completed two parkland purchases, committed funds to two cities for habitat purchases, and committed up to \$1 million to the State of Minnesota to help in purchasing the Brown's Creek Segment of the Willard Munger State Trail.

19. Which planning sections will you work in? Check all that apply in the list below.

Metropolitan Urbanizing Area

20. Does the request address an urgent conservation opportunity that will be lost if not immediately funded?

YES  NO

If yes, please explain.

The economic recession has slowed the rapid pace of urbanization, thus creating a window of opportunity to accelerate land acquisition to accomplish outstanding conservation objectives. During this time, Washington County will work with willing landowners to protect the remaining large lots and sensitive natural areas along the lower St. Croix River. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. For a limited time, the landowners are willing to partner with the county to protect their land instead of partnering with developers to build houses on their land. Forest and prairie grasses can still grow along the St. Croix River instead of houses and turf grass.

21. Does the request restore and/or enhance habitat on existing state-owned Wildlife or Aquatic Management Areas or Scientific and Natural Areas?

YES  NO

If Yes, list the names of the AMAs, WMAs and/or SNAs and the acres to be restored and/or enhanced.

22. Is this request based on assessment through a science based strategic planning and evaluation model similar to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Strategic Habitat Conservation model?

YES  NO

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If yes explain the model briefly.

### 23. Explain the scientific foundation for your project, and the benefits it will produce.

The county chose these projects as highest priority based upon solid science and strategic assessment. It used existing conservation plans and available data (e.g. State Conservation Plan, Minnesota Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, community comprehensive plans, watershed district management plans, Minnesota County Biological Survey, Natural Resources Inventory, Minnesota Land Cover Classification System, Integrating Groundwater and Surface Water Management in Washington County, wellhead protection plans, Washington County Geologic Atlas, Minnesota Department of Health information, National Wetlands Inventory) to evaluate the projects. The criteria and the selection process is described in more detail in #24.

### 24. How do you set priorities? (Be sure to list the criteria you use and the weight you give each one.)

Washington County chose these projects as the highest priority acquisitions after being screened for relevance and urgency, being evaluated against the site evaluation criteria by a technical review panel and being recommended for excellence by a citizen advisory committee. These projects showcase the county's priorities for this program: natural habitats for wildlife, fish and plants; shore lands of lakes, rivers, and streams; lands important to protect the quality of the county's ground water resources; lands that create critical connections and buffers; and lands that are accessible or visible to the public. The county also considers funding proposals brought forward by other entities. All projects are evaluated against the following criteria that have been adopted by the County Board:

High priority criteria (8 points, 55%)

- riparian lands
- relatively large tract of forest land
- contains one or more native plant communities
- within a wellhead protection area
- within an area highly susceptible to ground water contamination
- included in a land preservation plan
- adjacent to a county park

Medium priority criteria (5 points, 10%)

- adjacent to other land which is permanently protected from development
- erosion prone lands

Lower priority criteria (3 points, 3%)

- buffers and existing public facility

Other important criteria (3-8 points, 8%)

- parcel size

Imminence of threat (5-8 points, 24%)

- public use
- leveraging resources and conservation efforts
- project feasibility

For the first round of projects, the county chose to focus its efforts in key geographies rather than scattered over broad areas. This will allow us to make a noticeable and measurable difference in the areas we work. Improving the connectivity and functionality of priority habitats while providing public benefits is an important goal of the county's program.

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### C. Relationship to the *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan* and Other Published Resource Management Plans

The proposed projects address the following habitat recommendations in the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan:

- Habitat Recommendation #1: Protect priority land habitats. The plan identifies the St. Croix River valley as having high conservation priority. The proposed acquisitions are along the St. Croix River.
- Habitat Recommendation #2: Protect Critical Shore lands of Streams and Lakes. The plan suggests that high priority shore lands be protected via economic incentives and other tools such as conservation easements. The plan acknowledges conservation easements as one of the key tools necessary to achieve land conservation goals in metropolitan areas where high land values make it very difficult to acquire fee title to all priority lands. Lands along the St. Croix River are very expensive; the county can't afford to purchase all the land in fee. By acquiring conservation easements the county will be able to achieve its habitat and water quality goals by protecting more land while the land stays in private ownership and stays on the tax rolls.
- Habitat Recommendation #3: Improve Connectivity and Access to Outdoor Recreation. The proposed acquisitions will link parks and private natural areas along the Lower St. Croix River from Afton State Park south to Point Douglas County Park. As a separate, acquisition project (not part of this proposal), Washington County will acquire the right-of-way needed to complete a 2.5 mile segment of the new St. Croix Valley Regional Trail. This continuous ecological corridor will provide a natural buffer to this trail segment.
- Habitat Recommendation 7: Keep Water on the Landscape. Cropland on the protected parcels will be restored to native habitat in an attempt to reduce the volume and rate of runoff from the land. This will improve the nutrient loading and sedimentation problems in Lake St. Croix.

These properties have been identified in many published landscape-scale conservation plans as being critical natural areas and as having significant native land cover worthy of protection.

- The properties provide habitat in the St. Paul Baldwin Plains and Moraines subsection for a variety of species in greatest conservation need as established by the Department of Natural Resources plan *Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and the Rare: An Action Plan for Minnesota's Wildlife, Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, 2006*.
- The properties are located within the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway District, a unit of the National Park Service, established by Congress in 1972 to protect the scenery, water quality and other riverway values and jointly managed by the federal and state governments in accordance with a riverway management plan and zoning ordinance.
- The properties are located within the St. Croix Corridor of the Metro Conservation Corridors, a network of remaining critical habitat natural areas that are critical for the movement of native plants and wildlife across the landscape.
- The properties are located within a Regionally-Significant Ecological Area identified by the Department of Natural Resources as having the following characteristics: natural areas of sufficient size and shape to provide habitat for a spectrum of wildlife; areas that connect to other natural areas; and areas with the most intact native plant communities as identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey.
- Portions of the properties are identified in the Department of Natural Resources Minnesota County Biological Survey as having high biodiversity significance.
- Protection of the properties would retain natural shore lands along the St. Croix River, a part of the Trust for Public Land's Conservation Campaign's 50-Year Vision for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region.
- The properties will provide a natural buffer to the proposed St. Croix Valley Regional Trail that Washington County is in the process of acquiring.
- The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's new report, *The State of the Birds*, calls attention to significant bird population declines and the need for stronger conservation efforts.

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**D. Budget**

Budget Item	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
<b>Personnel</b>			
<b>Contracts</b>			
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies</b>			
<b>Fee Acquisition</b>			
<b>Easement Acquisition</b>	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000	
<b>Easement Stewardship</b>			
<b>Professional Services</b>			
<b>Travel</b>			
<b>Additional Budget Items</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000	

**E. Personnel Details** *In the space below list the names, titles and anticipated program funds to be paid by this recommendation. If you will need to fill a position just list the title and amount.*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Amount.</b>
NA		

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**F. All Leverage** In the table below list the sources and amounts of leverage you anticipate by fiscal year you anticipate receiving it. Include state and non-state leverage.

Source of Non-State Leverage	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
<b>Washington County</b>			
Acquisition	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000	
Landowner Donation	Unknown	Unknown	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,500,000</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>	

**G. Outcomes:**

- 1) *In the first table below, quantify the outcomes you plan to achieve with the recommended funds.*
- 2) *In the second table show list the sections where outcomes will occur.*
- 3) *In the third table, allocate your recommended funds to each cell with outcomes listed in table 1.*
- 4) *In the fourth table show the leverage to be applied to each cell with outcomes listed in table 1. and*
- 5) *If you have any outcomes listed in the “protect” row in table 1, account for them according to the type of acquisition and PILT status in table 5*

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<b>Table 1 Accomplish- ments</b>	<b>Wetlands</b>	<b>Prairies</b>	<b>Forests</b>	<b>Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife</b>
<b>Restore</b>		<i>89.1ac</i>		<i>89.1ac</i>
<b>Protect</b>				<i>310.9ac 1 mile St. Croix River bluff and river frontage</i>
<b>Enhance</b>	<i>1.5ac</i>	<i>2.4ac</i>	<i>307ac</i>	

<b>Table 2 Sections Impacted and Impact Quantifier</b>	<b>Wetlands</b>	<b>Prairies</b>	<b>Forests</b>	<b>Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife</b>
<b>Restore</b>		<i>Metro (89.1 ac)</i>		<i>Metro (89.1 ac)</i>
<b>Protect</b>				<i>Metro (310.9ac) 1 mile St. Croix River bluff and river frontage</i>
<b>Enhance</b>	<i>Metro (1.5 ac)</i>	<i>Metro (2.4 ac)</i>	<i>Metro (307 ac)</i>	

<b>Table 3 Recommend Fund Allocation</b>	<b>Wetlands</b>	<b>Prairies</b>	<b>Forests</b>	<b>Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife</b>
<b>Restore</b>		<i>\$891,000</i>		<i>\$891,000</i>
<b>Protect</b>	<i>\$15,000</i>	<i>\$24,000</i>	<i>\$3,070,000</i>	<i>\$3,109,000</i>
<b>Enhance</b>				

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<b>Table 4 Leverage \$</b>	<b>Wetlands</b>	<b>Prairies</b>	<b>Forests</b>	<b>Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife</b>
<b>Restore</b>		\$891,000		\$891,000
<b>Protect</b>	\$15,000	\$24,000	\$3,070,000	\$3,109,000
<b>Enhance</b>				

<b>Table 5 Acquisition Data</b>	<b>Wetlands</b>	<b>Prairies</b>	<b>Forests</b>	<b>Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife</b>
<b>Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Permanent Easement</b>	1.5 ac	91.5 ac	307 ac	400 ac 1 mile St. Croix River bluff and shoreline

**H. Accomplishment Time Table** Using the headings below, include a clear statement of how much of what is being accomplished and when. Attach a map showing where accomplishments are anticipated. Accomplishments should clearly restore, enhance or protect forests, wetlands, prairies and habitat for fish, game and wildlife.

Milestone	Date	Measure
Proposed Project #1: purchase conservation easement	fall 2010	88 acres protected
Proposed Project #2: purchase conservation easement	winter 2011	75 acres protected
Proposed Project #3: purchase conservation easement	spring 2011	90 acres protected
Project #4: purchase conservation easement	fall 2011	147 acres protected

### I. Relationship to Your Current Budget

Washington County has budgeted \$10 million in bonding in 2010 for Phase 1 of the Land and Water Legacy Program. The bonds will be sold when a large number of acquisitions are ready. The county can purchase properties up to eighteen months in advance of the bond sale by using fund balance which will be reimbursed from the bond proceeds. This enables the county to complete acquisitions as priority tracts become available and the matching funds are secured rather than waiting until the bonds are sold. All funds requested would enhance and not supplant existing funds. The requested amount would match 40% of the Land and Water Legacy Program's Phase 1 budget. The requested funds would amplify the county's funds by 50%.

### J. How Will the Habitat Improvements Be Sustained?

A conservation easement written in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 84C, will preserve and protect, in perpetuity, the conservation values of the property by prohibiting land uses, management and development that

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harms or negatively affects important habitat values. The conservation easements require the landowner to prepare and follow a natural resources management plan approved by the county that identifies opportunities to restore natural communities to some of the disturbed areas and to improve the quality of other areas.

Washington County will hold the interests in the land that is acquired. The county follows the standards and practices of the National Land Trust Alliance, thus ensuring long-lasting conservation easements. The county monitors each of its conservation easements annually. The county attorney enforces the county-held conservation easements. The county is working in concert with organizations such as the watershed district and the Washington Conservation District to focus restoration activities on lands that are permanently protected.

### **K. Attach a list of your projects listing their county location and edit the map of Minnesota on the next page to show each project as a symbol.**

Double left click to bring up the map editor. Symbols should be on the left side of the pop-up banner at the top of your screen or at the bottom left depending on your software.

If you can't bring up the interactive map editor follow these instructions:

1. Make a paper copy of the map,
2. By hand place symbols on the map corresponding to the location of the projects in your proposal,
3. Scan the marked map to a pdf, and
4. Insert the marked pdf map as the last page in your submission.

#### Proposed Project #1:

Size: 88 acres

Current Land Cover: 82 acres mesic oak forest; 2.4 acres medium tall grassland; 2.1 acres cropland recommended to be converted to southern mesic prairie after acquisition of the conservation easement; and 1.5 acres of sand beach. Parcel is classified by the DNR as having high biodiversity significance.

Adjoining Property: St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park abuts the property on the south; ¼ mile of St. Croix River frontage lies to the east; large wooded residential lot lies to the north; and cropland abuts the property on the west.

#### Proposed Project #2:

Size: 75 acres

Current Land Cover: 30 acres oak, red cedar forest; 45 acres cropland to some of which will be restored to native cover after acquisition of the conservation easement.

Adjoining Property: Carpenter Nature Center owns property to the south; ¼ mile of St. Croix River frontage abuts the property on the east; large lot residential properties lie to the north; and farmland abuts the property on the west.

#### Proposed Project #3:

Size: 90 acres

Current Land Cover: 45 acres oak, maple basswood forest and 45 acres orchard and corn field to be restored to native cover after acquisition of the conservation easement.

Adjoining Property: Carpenter Nature Center owns property to the north and the west; ½ mile of St. Croix River frontage abuts the property on the east; and the county is currently negotiating to purchase the parcel to the south.

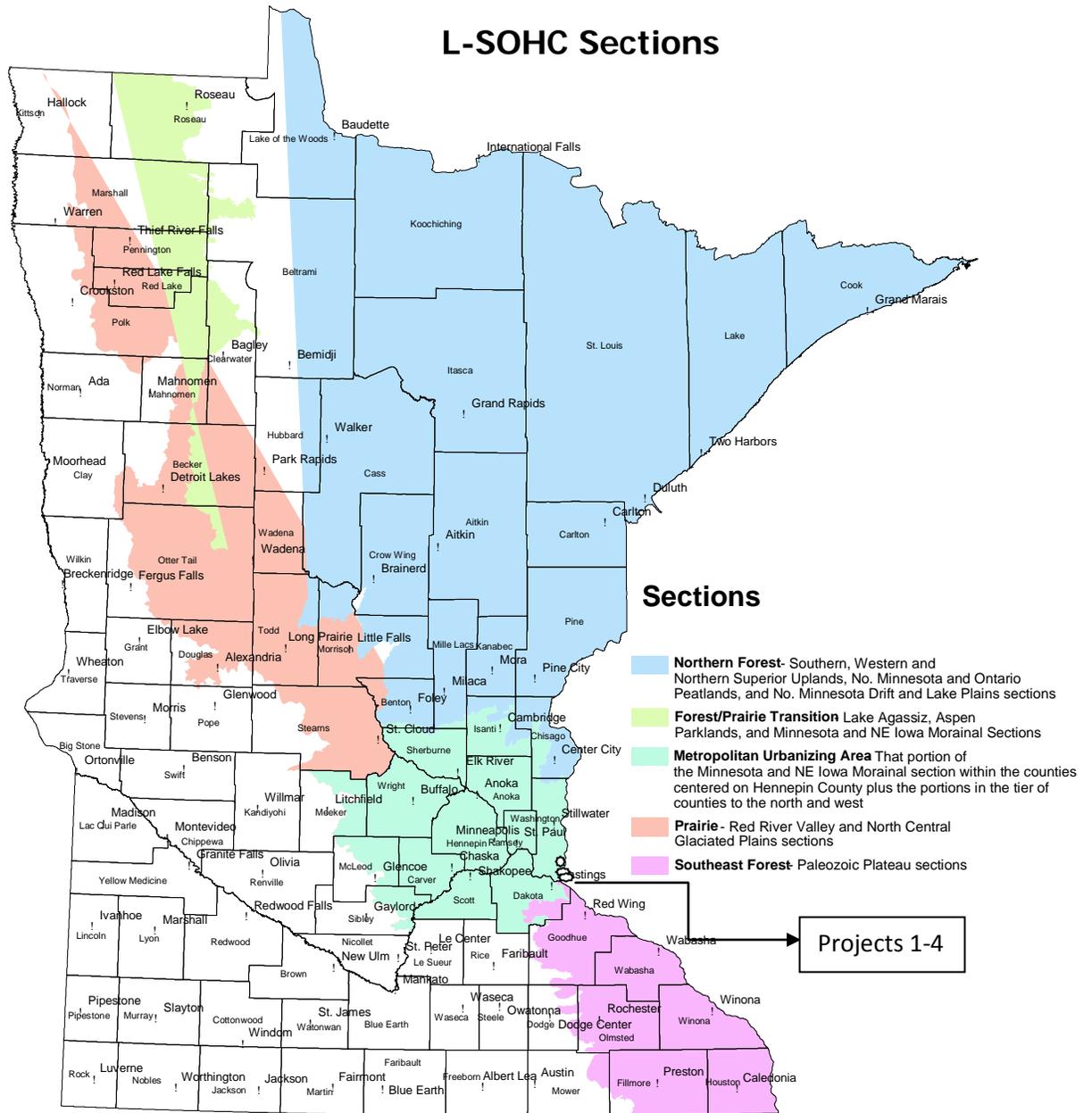
#### Project #4:

Size: 147 acres

Acquisition of a conservation easement on yet to be determined parcels near or along the St. Croix River.

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