

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2011-2012 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Subd: 04g

Project Title: Minnesota River Valley Green Corridor Scientific and Natural Area Acquisition

Category: D. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Total Project Budget: \$ \$2,000,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 yrs, July 2011 - June 2014

Other Non-State Funds (secured): \$ 0

Summary:

Protect the most ecologically sensitive available lands identified by MCBS, DNR Ecological Resources, and Green Corridor Conservation Plan from destruction/degradation/fragmentation in cooperation with the Minnesota DNR.

Name: Brad Cobb

Sponsoring Organization: Green Corridor Inc.

Address: 103 2nd Street
Redwood Falls MN 56283

Telephone Number: 320-493-4695

Email 1231tlc@charter.net

Web Ad _____

Location:

Region: SW

Ecological Section: North Central Glaciated Plains (251B)

County Name: Brown, Chippewa, Nicollet, Redwood, Renville, Yellow Medicine

City / Township:

2011-2012 MAIN PROPOSAL

LCCMR ID# 116-D – Revised 10-28- 2010

PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota River Valley – Green Corridor Project Phase II

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

This project is a continuation of our FY08 LCCMR activities with a renewed emphasis on protecting the most ecologically sensitive areas or regions of the mid-section of the Minnesota River Valley through fee title acquisitions that could become degraded, fragmented, or even destroyed by further residential, agricultural, or mining developments. The primary goal of this project is to protect through fee title acquisition approximately 417 acres of the most critically sensitive habitat lands and transfer ownership to the MN DNR Scientific & Natural Area (SNA) Program. These properties would be acquired from willing/supportive sellers within targeted areas of the MN River Valley. In cooperation with the MN DNR Division of Ecological and Water Resources and the use of the LCCMR funded Minnesota River Valley Green Corridor Conservation plan we have identified four (4) key areas/regions with remnant native prairie, rare rock outcrop communities, and/or other critical or sensitive natural habitats that have been recommended by the Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS) as high priorities for protection in which we will concentrate our efforts. Each site has an MCBS-prepared Ecological Evaluation report which serves as a baseline assessment report. We will evaluate and secure agreements with willing/supportive landowners who own properties within these four (4) target areas and then prioritize them for protection through fee title agreements. In all cases properties will be acquired in fee then transferred to the MN DNR Division of Ecological and Water Resources for designation and management as Scientific and Natural Areas. The DNR - SNA program is willing to identify opportunities to interpret SNA's and encourage "light on the land" use in conjunction with Natural or Ecological Interpretive Trails proposed in the Minnesota River Valley.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Evaluate & Complete Property Considerations **Budget: \$88,280**

Within the four (4) target areas the contracted Program Manager through the Redwood Area Communities Foundation (RACF) will perform this activity by coordinating and reviewing various conservation plans in cooperation and coordination with DNR Ecological and Water Resource staff and working from the DNR priority acquisition list.

Contracted Program Manager will then begin working with landowners who own land of the most ecological importance for protection as proposed by MCBS/Green Corridor Conservation Plan and then contact those landowners (through letters, telephone/email corresponds, direct contacts or visits) to discuss their willingness to participate in this project. If during these discussions it is learned that a landowner would prefer to participate in the DNR Prairie Bank Easement Program – Program Manager will submit that information to the DNR for their follow up. Program Manager has demonstrated skill sets to successfully perform this activity. We anticipate 20-25 landowner contacts of which we would anticipate 6-8 purchase agreements from willing landowners with the most critical habitats in need of protection.

Contracted Program Manager will verify that all proposed project fee title acquisitions receive the required DNR Commissioner approvals and issuance of a third party agreement letter from the DNR. Securing the anticipated 6-8 projects for fee acquisition includes the fulfillment of LCCMR Exhibit F requirements, County Board Approval, final negotiations, and DNR

acceptance process. Contract Program Manager will also solicit appraisal bids, collection of property documents (deeds/abstracts) from landowner for title review, and secure purchase agreement. Program Manager Professional Services = 438 hrs. x \$60/h = \$26,280. Travel time will be calculated at \$30/hr. –estimated travel time is 60/hrs x \$30/hr = \$2,000

Travel/Mileage by Contracted Program Manager budgeted at \$1,500

Redwood Area Communities Foundation (RACF) contracted staff Linda Sullivan – Administrative Assistance Redwood Area Development Corporation will be responsible for general grant administration which includes but not limited too; fiscal accountability/audits, grant fund invoices/transfers, and record keeping, coordinating legal documents and filings with legal representative, and document retention. RACF Grant Administration Services is budgeted for \$7,500

RACF Professional Services; Contracted 3rd Party Appraisals. Legal services to create and review purchase agreements and other legal services. RACF Professional Service Budget is estimated a 6 projects @ \$4,500 each = \$27,000

DNR Acquisition Transaction Costs: For direct activities and work associated to the review, process, and transfer title ownership to the DNR/state. To include DNR SNA staff time, Lands and Minerals (LAM) transaction costs and Attorney General Office title reviews/approvals. Cost \$4,000 per project x 6 projects = \$24,000

Outcome – Activity #1	Completion Date
Step 1= 20-25 Initial parcel reviews and landowner contacts	July 2012
Step 2= 6-8 3 rd Party Appraisals, Legal Review and signed Purchase Agreements	December 2012
Step 3= 6-8 DNR Acquisition Activities: Boundary Surveys, title reviews, closings, and title transfers	June 2013

Activity 2: Fee Title Acquisition of 417 acres **Budget: \$1,881,720**

Approximately 417 acres will protected by fee title acquisition. The projected cost per acre increased since the original submission due to several factors; recent comparable land sales in the region and listing prices of comparable lands by individuals and/or auction companies. Projecting land cost 16-20 months out is difficult. These acquired properties will receive County Board Approval and would be deeded to the DNR for inclusion in the SNA program and they will be responsible for all future management activities.

Outcome – Activity #2	Completion Date
Protect in fee title 417 acres and transfer to DNR/state	June 2013

Activity 3: Initial Site Development/Management **Budget: \$30,000**

DNR SNA Program will be responsible for developing a natural resource management plan for each site acquired and initiating site development and management as part of this project. Each management plan will identify site specific development and management activities needed and the ecologically sound timeline for implementing the practices. Development and

management activities include installation of boundary signs and entrance sign, construction of a small gravel parking area (if needed for users), invasive species control, woody encroachment removal as needed to return outcrop and prairie areas to more natural condition, prescribed burning (along with development of fire breaks), and, if needed, plant community rehabilitation of degraded portions of sites through supplemental seeding or planting or reconstruction of plant communities if any plowed fields are acquired as buffer (including seed collection, site preparation, planting, and establishment maintenance). The timing and funding of these activities will both depend upon when the lands acquired are under state control (aka after closing by DNR) and SNA standards and procedures needed for ecological integrity of management practices. For example, when the Department has an Election to Purchase on the site, development of a management plan can commence. For projects with DNR closing by March 2014 (assuming the appropriation is through June 2014), the DNR can only assure completing the management plan and installing the boundary signs and entrance sign by June 14. For projects with DNR closing by July 2013, DNR could do the signing, parking area (if needed), first phase of any woody removal, installation of burn breaks and first phase of prescribed burning (if appropriate to site conditions); also it might be ecologically possible to do initial phases of any plant community rehabilitation or reconstruction (e.g. initial seed collection). Scheduling of development and management activities needs to reflect ecological and weather considerations as well as staff/contractor capacity and will therefore be primarily done by the SNA program after this appropriation is closed. Cost = \$5,000 per projects x 6 projects = \$30,000

Outcome – Activity #3	Completion Date
Initial Site Development and Management	June 2014

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Redwood Area Communities Foundation (RACF) Professional service administration, oversight, auditing, and fund appropriations.

Brad Cobb – Contracted Project Manager Green Corridor Inc. Responsible for Activities 1 & 2

Minnesota DNR, Scientific and Natural Area Program – Responsible for Activity 3

Tatanka Bluffs Corridor Inc – Advocacy partner

Minnesota River Watershed Alliance – Advocacy partner

Redwood Area Development Corporation – Technical and Advocacy partner

Redwood Area Chamber & Tourism – Advocacy partner

B. Timeline Requirements

Outcomes as listed in the Activity Section to be accomplished by June 30, 2014.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

The Minnesota River Valley Green Corridor Phase II program is a continuation of the FY08 LCCMR grant which established the framework for future activities. Phase II emphasis will be to protect the most critically sensitive and/or ecologically significant natural resource eco systems as recommended by the Minnesota County Biological Survey. The long range strategy is to work in partnership with the DNR and using the FY08 LCCMR funded Green Corridor

Conservation Plan in guiding and directing all future activities in concert with our regional and state-wide partnerships.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget - Revised

IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET - Three (3) years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Fiscal Administration Activity #1: Redwood Area Communities Foundation 07/01/2011 - 06/30/2014 - total budget for this position = \$7,500	\$7,500
Contracts Activity #1: Brad Cobb - Green Corridor Inc Contracted Project Manager. 438 hrs @ \$60/hr. = \$26,280 and approximately 60-66 hours of travel time @ \$30/hr. = \$2,000 7/1/2011 - 6/30/2014	\$28,280
Acquisition - Fee Title Activity #2: 417 acres estimated at \$4500/acre of fee title acquisitions from willing landowners and transfer title to the MN DNR	\$1,881,720
Travel Activity #1: All travel is associated to accomplishing Activities 1 & 2. Total estimated mileage 2,970 miles @ \$.505/mile	\$1,500
Additional Budget Items: Activity #1 Professional services by RACF; appraisers, legal/title and purchase agreement reviews. Estimated 6 projects @ \$4,500 each = <u>\$27,000</u> . DNR Professional services Activity # 1; SNA staff time, LAM transaction costs, appraisal review, AGO title reviews, recording costs, etc. Estimated 6 projects @\$4,000 each = <u>\$24,000</u> . DNR Initial Site Development & Preparation of Natural Resource Plans Activity #3; Development of individual site Natural Resource Management Plans, signs, parking area if needed for users, and initial management (e.g. woody encroachment removal, prescribed burning, etc). Estimated 6 projects @ \$5,000 average = <u>\$30,000</u> .	\$81,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 2,000,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: If funded will attempt to receive matching funds from other organizations and/or negotiating bargain sales with willing landowners.	\$20,000	Pending
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: N/A	\$0	
In-kind Services During Project Period: Approx. 200 hours of In Kind services for assistance from skilled members of the Green Corridor Board of Directors helping to identify and contacting landowners in the 4 key focus areas. 200 hrs @ \$30/hr	\$6,000	
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): FY2008 Minnesota River Valley Green Corridor Project is completed.	\$0	Completed
Funding History: FY08 ENRTF - \$1,000,000, FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) \$1,617,000, and FY11 OHF (pending) \$1,651,000	\$4,269,000	In process

2011-2012 Acquisition List for Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Proposal

Project Title: Minnesota River Valley Green Corridor Phase II

Project Manager Name: Brad Cobb

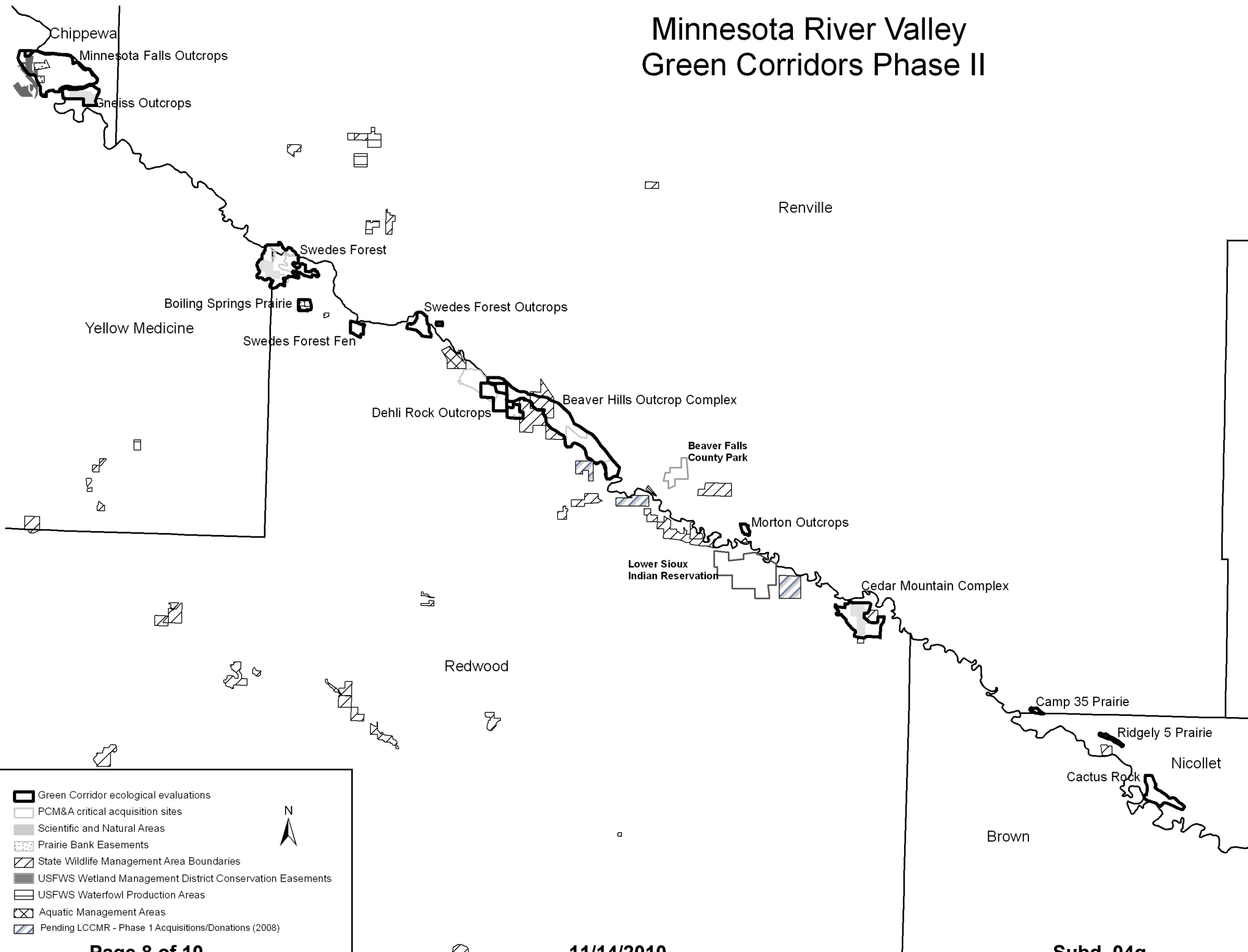
Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund \$ Request: \$2,000,000

Final Title Holder(s): MN DNR

#	Parcel Name	Acquisition Type (Fee-Title OR Conservation Easement)	County	Estimated # of Acres	Geographical Coordinates (Provide Latitude/Longitude OR UTM-X/UTM-Y)			
					Latitude	Longitude	UTM-X	UTM-Y
1	Cactus Rock	Fee Title	Nicollet	160			366405	4919341
2	Delhi Rock Outcrops	Fee Title	Redwood	170			327710	4942385
3	Morton Outcrops	Fee Title	Renville	35			341647	4935327
4	Beaver Falls Outcrop Complex	Fee Title	Renville	1,200			330275	4943200
5	Ceder Mountain Complex	Fee Title	Redwood	520			348519	4929871
6	Swedes Forest	Fee Title	Redwood	600			313038	4950974
7	Swedes Forest Outcrops	Fee Title	Redwood	200			322106	4947735
8	Swedes Forest Fen	Fee Title	Redwood	140			318132	4947385
9	Boiling Springs Prairie	Fee Title	Redwood	100			315016	4948856
12	Minnesota Falls Outcrops	Fee Title	Yellow Medicine	200			297829	49639229
13	Gneiss Outcrops	Fee Title	Yellow Medicine	200			301542	4961501
14								
15								
16								

NOTES: These listed complexes are compiled from DNR Ecological and Water Resources and in some cases involve multiple landowners. These complexes fall within the 4 Key Target Areas of the project proposal. From this list and others that may develop if and when ENRTF appropriation is granted we will select the highest quality tracts from willing landowners for fee title acquisitions in cooperation with DNR Ecological & Water Resources.

Minnesota River Valley Green Corridors Phase II



	Green Corridor ecological evaluations
	PCM&A critical acquisition sites
	Scientific and Natural Areas
	Prairie Bank Easements
	State Wildlife Management Area Boundaries
	USFWS Wetland Management District Conservation Easements
	USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas
	Aquatic Management Areas
	Pending LCCMR - Phase 1 Acquisitions/Donations (2008)

N

Organizational Description

Name - Redwood Area Communities Foundation dba Green Corridor Inc.

The Redwood Area Communities Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization established in 1988 for civic, charitable, benevolent, educational, cultural and other eligible purposes as approved by its board of directors. The Foundation is managed by a volunteer board of directors that meet on a regular basis to review sponsorship requests and conduct business. RACF enables Redwood County organizations to concentrate on program development instead of the administrative details of forming a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. Currently the RACF assists 32 subsidiaries (entities) with management of over \$2.5 million. The RACF acts as an “incubator for the nonprofit community.” We provide a vehicle for benevolent individuals to give back to Redwood County.

Each Subsidiary Fund retains its own identity. The subsidiary is responsible for the conduct of the project. The subsidiary is responsible for liability issues for its project. Each Subsidiary Fund retains local control and decision making of their program and funds. The RACF provides administration, accounting and money management so that subsidiaries can focus on their program.

The Redwood Area Communities Foundation does not employ staff. All administrative activities are managed through a contract for service with the Redwood Area Development Corporation.

The Green Corridor Board of Directors is responsible for their mission, goals and projects. The Board makes all decisions and is responsible for conducting business.

Green Corridor Inc. is a regional initiative governed by a seven (7) member Board of Directors. Two (2) Redwood Area Development Corporation staff serve as ex-officio members on the Green Corridor Board of Directors. The mission statement for Green Corridor reads; “Creating a legacy of natural resource protection, habitat connectivity, public access, and outdoor recreation which’s promotes economic growth and tourism.” Green Corridor Inc. and their many stakeholders recognizes the connection between providing a wide variety of high quality outdoor recreational opportunities which can play a vital role in creating or enhancing regional economic growth, development, and tourism by working in concert with local, state, and federal agencies, community/civic groups, and businesses.

Program Manager Qualifications

Bradley H. Cobb – Green Corridor Inc. will contract project manager activities with Bradley H. Cobb who has successfully implemented the \$1,000,000 Minnesota River Valley Green Corridor Phase I – FY08 LCCMR grant under a similar relationship with the Southwest Initiative Foundation. He also successfully secured and currently managing the \$1,617,000 Green Corridor Legacy Program – FY10 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) funded by the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF). And has secured and will manage a FY11 LSOHC recommendation for \$1,651,000 which is proceeding through the 2010 legislative appropriation process. Bradley H. Cobb has nearly 25 years experience in wildlife and conservation activities; has served on the MN DNR Game & Fish Fund Budget Oversight Committee for seven (7) years from 2002-2009 – the last three (3) years as chairman. Mr. Cobb received the 2003 MN DNR Division of Wildlife Special Recognition of Year Award for his “outstanding contributions to farmland conservation”, and received the 2007 Pheasants Forever Volunteer of the Year Award. Mr. Cobb currently serves on several DNR advisory committees and is a volunteer advisor to several area/regional wildlife organizations.

