



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2021 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2021-397

Proposal Title: Creating Prioritized Plan for Restoring the Stewart River Watershed

Project Manager Information

Name: John Lenczewski

Organization: Minnesota Trout Unlimited

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: We will develop a plan for the Stewart River Watershed that identifies and prioritizes specific river and land restoration and protection activities to efficiently meet the broadest ecological restoration goals.

Funds Requested: \$298,000

Proposed Project Completion: 2024-06-30

LCCMR Funding Category: Methods to Protect, Restore, and Enhance Land, Water, and Habitat (F)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): NE

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): NE

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

Existing watershed restoration and protection plans, while very good, were developed at a large scale (HUC 8). For those plans' strategies to have the greatest impact on the health of the Stewart River a detailed master plan needs to be developed the smaller HUC 12 scale. Minnesota Trout Unlimited and partners will assess this watershed and create a Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan that will identify the causes of impairments and develop a systematic restoration and protection project list and target work in a holistic and efficient manner. This plan will provide LGU's and others a prioritized list of locations and methods to most effectively restore and maintain the health of the Stewart River and its aquatic life. Prioritization will focus on projects that meet multiple objectives to address all components of watershed health. MNTU will use the plan to direct future restoration projects. This effort will demonstrate how a holistic, comprehensive plan can be developed for more "manageable size" watershed. We have several collaborators already working in the watershed, a high level of commitment demonstrated by their past and current work, high public interest and use of the watershed, and supportive partners with complimentary resources

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? i.e. What are you seeking funding to do? You will be asked to expand on this in Activities and Milestones.

We will work with partners to create a Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan for the 32 square mile Stewart River watershed. This master plan will identify the causes of impairments and develop systematic restoration and protection projects that address the identified impairments in a targeted, holistic and efficient way within the Stewart River watershed. An information and planning gap exists between existing larger scale plans and detailed information needed for on-the-ground implementation work at a smaller scale. Agencies lack the time and funding necessary to organize existing data at the scale needed and conduct intense field work and analysis where data has not yet been collected. The Stewart River has been identified as a top tier coldwater resource for restoration and protection. Focusing assessments and planning at this scale is necessary to accurately determine the most effective restoration techniques and locations. Developing a master plan for this priority watershed will also showcase how to move away from "random acts of conservation" and single objective projects (e.g. just addressing erosion). This project can thus serve as a pilot example for use in other HUC 12 watersheds on the North Shore and across the state.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

The master plan will identify and prioritize cost-effective and integrated projects that will restore and protect the ecological and physical functions of the watershed. A healthy watershed with a stable channel will provide high quality habitat for fish and other aquatic life. Implementing the plan will make the river and watershed more resilient to climate change and maintain biological processes supporting native species far into the future. Specific outcomes will include a summary of data gathered, a prioritization matrix of restoration and protection actions, a Watershed Restoration and Protection Master Plan, and a list of projects, cost estimates, and timelines.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Gather Existing Information, conduct Geomorphic Assessment, and Collect Additional Field Data

Activity Budget: \$93,000

Activity Description:

Define the scope of watershed planning effort, focusing on the main stressors while also addressing ecological and physical watershed health components. (Hydrology, Geomorphology, Connectivity, Water Quality, and Biology). Gather existing watershed data and create an inventory. Identify data gaps. Analyze data to characterize the watershed and pollutant sources. Compare existing data sets to one another to analyze relationships.

Collect geomorphic data in the field. Data collection will be focused on stream stability and habitat health. During this phase, the stream and tributaries will be broken into reaches that will later be used to identify the need for restoration and/or protection activities. Stream bank erosion, connection to the floodplain, habitat diversity, and overhead cover will be some of the parameters collected for each reach. The geomorphic assessment will be completed on the entire main stem, the Little Stewart, and the main tributaries. Riparian condition including vegetation health will also be noted. Previously collected, stream-road crossing data will be reviewed while in the field.

Activity Milestones:

| Description | Completion Date |
|--|-----------------|
| Maps and visual aids of geospatial data. | 2022-01-31 |
| Inventory and summary of existing watershed data gathered from partners; including a data management plan. | 2022-01-31 |
| DNR stream crossing inventory forms reviewed or completed for crossings | 2022-10-31 |
| Riparian condition assessed for at least 20 reaches. | 2022-10-31 |
| Stream stability and habitat parameters collected for over 20 stream reaches within the watershed. | 2022-10-31 |

Activity 2: Create a Watershed Restoration and Protection Master Plan to Inform Restoration, Protection and Habitat Enhancement Implementation.

Activity Budget: \$98,000

Activity Description:

- a. Set goals and identify solutions
 - i. Establish conservation goals for the watershed
 - ii. Prioritize restoration and protection efforts that address sources of excess sediment and health of aquatic life, and that use holistic methods that address ecological and physical watershed functions.
- b. Identify management strategies
 - i. Identify categories and sources of stress for each conservation goal.
 - ii. Develop a list of strategies/projects that will eliminate the sources of stress
- c. Evaluate options and select final management strategies
 - i. Develop a matrix of potential funding sources and partner responsibility for pursuing specific opportunities.
 - ii. Develop scoping for each of the strategies/projects that will include descriptions, responsible partners, cost and timeline estimates.
- iii. Management strategies could include:
 - Address road-stream crossings acting as fish passage barriers
 - Perform stream restoration using the most current and accepted methods
 - Work with the state and other entities to purchase easements and enforce zoning policy to protect the stream

and riparian zone

- Inform landowners, stakeholders, and user groups on the efforts of the Watershed Restoration and Protection Master Plan and the health of the watershed

Activity Milestones:

| Description | Completion Date |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Complete master plan | 2023-06-30 |

Activity 3: Conceptual design development

Activity Budget: \$107,000

Activity Description:

Develop stream designs

Activity Milestones:

| Description | Completion Date |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Complete designs | 2024-06-30 |

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this be funded?

The project will create a detailed, prioritized roadmap for restoration and protection of the Stewart River and its watershed. It will also generate restoration designs for the highest priority river reaches. MNTU will then use these to implement fish habitat restoration projects using other funding sources, including the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: John Lenczewski

Job Title: Executive Director

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

The project manager has managed Minnesota Trout Unlimited's habitat restoration projects in the Stewart River Watershed, elsewhere on the North Shore and statewide for the past 10 years. He has also collaborated with numerous state, county, municipal, federal, and nonprofit partners involved in watershed and natural resource management in northeast Minnesota.

Organization: Minnesota Trout Unlimited

Organization Description:

Minnesota Trout Unlimited is a nonprofit conservation organization working to protect, restore, reconnect, and sustain coldwater fisheries and watersheds throughout Minnesota. We have been actively involved in restoration of in-stream habitat and riparian forests in the Stewart River watershed since 2012.

Budget Summary

| Category / Name | Subcategory or Type | Description | Purpose | Gen. Ineligible | % Benefits | # FTE | Classified Staff? | \$ Amount |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|-----------------|------------|-------|-------------------|------------------|
| Personnel | | | | | | | | |
| MNTU program manager | | Manage program and staff; oversee budget, reimbursements and reporting | | | 24% | 0.36 | | \$36,500 |
| Steward Watershed Project Manager | | Implement project, including coordination with partners, field assessments, plan development and landowner outreach. | | | 24% | 3 | | \$223,200 |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | \$259,700 |
| Contracts and Services | | | | | | | | |
| Watershed newsletter editor | Professional or Technical Service Contract | Write, compile, edit and publish newsletter for all landowners within the watershed to inform and build support for protection and restoration activities. | | | | 0.27 | | \$16,200 |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | \$16,200 |
| Equipment, Tools, and Supplies | | | | | | | | |
| | Equipment | Rental of equipment for Geomorphic Assessment (80 hours x \$50/hour) | Conduct Geomorphic Assessment river channel | | | | | \$4,000 |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | \$4,000 |
| Capital Expenditures | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| Acquisitions and Stewardship | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| Travel In Minnesota | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|------------------------|------------------|
| | Miles/ Meals/ Lodging | Mileage reimbursement (8,000 miles over 3 yerars) | Travel to and from watershed; travel within watershed; treval to partners; | | | | | \$4,600 |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | \$4,600 |
| Travel Outside Minnesota | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| Printing and Publication | | | | | | | | |
| | Printing | Print and mail newslteer to all landowners (3/year x 3 years) | To inform and build support for planning effort, protection and restoration activities. | | | | | \$13,500 |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | \$13,500 |
| Other Expenses | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| | | | | | | | Grand Total | \$298,000 |

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

| Category/Name | Subcategory or Type | Description | Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------|--|
|---------------|---------------------|-------------|--|

Non ENRTF Funds

| Category | Specific Source | Use | Status | Amount |
|-----------|-----------------|-----|---------------------|--------|
| State | | | | |
| | | | State Sub Total | - |
| Non-State | | | | |
| | | | Non State Sub Total | - |
| | | | Funds Total | - |

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [4578d7aa-41a.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Restored section of Stewart River.

Financial Capacity

File: [1d6486e6-e3d.pdf](#)

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Does your project have patent, royalties, or revenue potential?

No

Does your project include research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

Yes, Trout Unlimited, Inc.

Creating A Prioritized Plan for Restoring the Stewart River Watershed

Stewart River



