



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2021 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2021-446

Proposal Title: Turning Back to Rivers: Environmental and Recreational Protection

Project Manager Information

Name: DJ Forbes

Organization: The Trust for Public Land

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Email: dj.forbes@tpl.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: This project will help communities acquire priority land along the Mississippi, St. Croix, and Minnesota Rivers, and their tributaries, protecting the environment and water quality while creating much-needed recreational opportunities.

Funds Requested: \$3,804,000

Proposed Project Completion: 2024-06-30

LCCMR Funding Category: Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation (G)

Project Location

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

Statewide

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

Statewide

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.

Thousands of Minnesotans live within mere miles of the state's iconic Mississippi, St. Croix, and Minnesota Rivers, and their major tributaries, and cannot access and enjoy the rivers or the land adjacent to them. In the Land of 10,000 Lakes, our rivers are under-valued and increasingly inaccessible natural assets. Historically, these rivers have been predominately used for industry and commerce, and then dumping and waste. Communities viewed these natural amenities as opportunities for commercial development rather than spaces for the public to enjoy. Reality has thankfully shifted. Communities throughout the state now understand the environmental and recreational benefits their rivers offer as nearby natural assets ripe for protection and public enjoyment. Communities are eager to partner to protect these dynamic riverside assets.

These communities have created plans and identified and prioritized opportunities for the protection of public open space, but they lack funding, capacity, and the real estate know-how to effectively achieve their goals. TPL brings expertise in complex real estate transactions, and we have the proficiencies needed to help communities efficiently solve their specific natural resource needs.

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.

Working hand in hand with river communities, The Trust for Public Land (TPL) will protect land through fee title acquisition and increase access on and near Minnesota's great rivers. Our partnership is based on existing local area plans and we will protect approximately 400 acres of high priority, high quality natural resource land: lands with high recreational value, lands that address access gaps, lands that maximize scenic and habitat benefits, and lands that help to protect from high water and flooding.

By permanently protecting these lands, multiple benefits are achieved:

- Protection of high quality natural resource land for community enjoyment, wildlife habitat, and water quality
- Resilience due to improved ecosystem connectivity of native animal and plant populations (including "Species in Greatest Conservation Need") in the face of climate change and invasive species
- Increased access to various outdoor recreation opportunities along Minnesota's rivers, improving the connection between people and Minnesota's natural resources
- Additional buffers from high water and flooding

Protecting these parcels for resource based recreational needs, addressing access gaps areas, and inspiring river-oriented communities is a demand that can be uniquely met by ENRTF/LCCMR funding.

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?

In partnership with local and county government, we will protect approximately 400 acres through fee title acquisition of high priority, high quality natural resource land. These properties have been prioritized in state, regional, and local natural resource and recreation plans, reflecting strong community support. Our efforts will focus on river communities throughout the state by protecting land that they are excited to manage and that will provide multiple outdoor recreational opportunities. These lands are not eligible for other protection funding due in large part to hunting requirements.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Protect Strategic Lands: Fee-title acquisition of high priority lands along the Mississippi, St. Croix, and Minnesota Rivers, and their tributaries

Activity Budget: \$3,804,000

Activity Description:

Eligible parcels (see attached acquisition parcel list) have been identified by communities in local plans as priorities for recreational value, high quality natural resources, lands that address access gaps, scenic qualities, and/or water protection. Not all parcels can be protected at the same time. Prioritization factors include adjacency to already protected land; landowner willingness to sell for conservation purposes; final local decision making on protection; and other due diligence. TPL will conduct all due diligence activities including appraisals, environmental reviews, title investigations, and survey work. Acquired land will be conveyed to our public agency partner (local units of government or MN DNR) for long-term stewardship, maintenance, and if called for, park and trail development. An example is:

- Cottage Grove Kiln/Mississippi River: Adjacent to city-owned Settlers Island, Urmann Ries site, and Moores Park, the acquisition of this parcel would add to the river access trail vision planned by the National Park Service and the City of Cottage Grove. This site will provide community access to the river for educational and recreational opportunities, and includes the historic Grey Cloud Lime Kiln, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. This is a high priority for Cottage Grove.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Protect approximately 400 acres for public use and enjoyment through fee-title acquisition	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?

Strengthening the connection between land and people is vital in ensuring the long-term stewardship of Minnesota's natural resources. We view this proposal as a long-term strategy, and will continue its work as long as critical habitat and natural resources based recreation opportunities remain unprotected and in danger of degradation and loss. Land protection is not the final step in helping communities turn back to rivers; however, it is a critical step needed before long-term restoration, stewardship, and programming of these riverfront areas can take place. These activities will be led and funded by the long-term steward of the resource.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Metro Conservation Corridors Phase VIII - Strategic Lands Protection	M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 09f	\$750,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: DJ Forbes

Job Title: Project Manager

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

Below are brief biographies of The Trust for Public Land staff which are anticipated to be involved with this project.

This project will be managed by DJ Forbes, Project Manager, The Trust for Public Land. DJ has been with TPL for five years and supports multiple TPL initiatives; helping to create parks and protect land for people in both urban and rural areas. DJ manages all aspects of real estate transactions including initial research and outreach; negotiating contracts; advocating for and securing financing; and coordinating due diligence work. Prior to his work at TPL, DJ was a Senior Planner for the Active Living program at Hennepin County. He also served as a Project Manager with the City of Chelsea Department of Planning and Development in Massachusetts. DJ has a MA in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning from Tufts University and a BA in Geography and History from DePaul University.

Bob McGillivray, Senior Project Manager, The Trust for Public Land. Bob has been with TPL for over fifteen years. He works directly with landowners, public agency partners, and community members to protect land throughout the state of Minnesota for public use and enjoyment. He manages all aspects of real estate transactions including conducting property research; negotiating contracts; advocating for and securing financing; and coordinating due diligence activities. Prior to joining TPL, Bob was a partner at the law firm of Oppenheimer Wolff & Donnelly with a broad commercial practice. He also served as a law clerk for the Honorable Edward J. Devitt, United States District Court Judge; a Special Assistant Attorney General with the Minnesota Attorney General's Office; and a legal intern with the United Nations and the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York.

Organization: The Trust for Public Land

Organization Description:

Since 1972, The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has protected more than 3.5 million acres, created or transformed 5,000 new public places across America, forged hundreds of active partnerships, and developed more than 2,000 miles of trails

across the U.S. TPL has also helped states and local communities generate more than \$68 billion in new public funds for parks and open space.

Our strategic focus on improving outdoor access reflects learning from more than forty years protecting public land to advance our “Land for People” mission. We have heard from communities across America that access to the outdoors is central to a life well-lived, something that should be treated as a basic human right. It is well-documented that there are many other benefits communities gain from America’s lands and waters beyond just recreational access—benefits like clean water, forestry and farming, economic diversity through outdoor businesses, improved mental and physical health, stronger community ties, and spiritual inspiration. Both public and private land conservation can truly be a “triple-bottom line” investment, providing social, economic and environmental benefits for our country.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Land Protection Staff		Land Protection Staff			32%	0.96		\$162,000
Legal Staff		Legal Staff			32%	0.12		\$18,000
							Sub Total	\$180,000
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Acquisition costs	Professional services for fee-title acquisition. For example, appraisals, environmental assessments, surveys, etc. Our professional services budget is based on the assumption that we will close 5 transactions and investigate 3 others.				0		\$122,500
							Sub Total	\$122,500
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
	Fee Title Acquisition	Acres: 400 Parcels: 5						\$3,391,500
							Sub Total	\$3,391,500
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-

Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
		Initial Development Costs	Initial site preparation costs; for example, signage, parking lots, fencing, etc.					\$90,000
		DNR Land Acquisition Costs	For transactions where the DNR will be the long-term steward, monies are for DNR Lands & Minerals staff for real estate review costs.					\$20,000
							Sub Total	\$110,000
							Grand Total	\$3,804,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
In-Kind	Local Match	Includes land acquisition capital, initial development costs, operation and maintenance, and in-kind staff time.	Pending	\$500,000
Cash	The Trust for Public Land will fundraise private funds to cover the necessary indirect costs and travel costs related to this project.	The Trust for Public Land will fundraise private funds to cover the necessary indirect costs and travel costs related to this project.	Secured	\$128,400
			Non State Sub Total	\$628,400
			Funds Total	\$628,400

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Brainerd/Mississippi River	Crow Wing	Located within the heart of Brainerd, acquisition of these parcels would allow the City to create a park and access the river.	Fee Title	3.2	0.1	\$254,000	Private	City of Brainerd	Has not begun
Byllesby Park/Cannon River	Goodhue	Located between the main park area and the upper park area, acquisition of these parcels would provide additional riverside protection and access, and nearly double the size of this unique recreational area located on the Cannon River at Lake Byllesby. This is a high priority for Goodhue County.	Fee Title	117	1	\$600,000	Private	Goodhue County	Has not begun
Caron Park/Prairie Creek	Rice	Located along Prairie Creek and abutting Caron Park, the acquisition of these parcels will provide additional acreage and access to this important Rice County park.	Fee Title	70	0.1	\$400,000	Private	Rice County	Has not begun
Chippewa County/Minnesota River	Chippewa	Increases access to Minnesota River, adjacent to County Property.	Fee Title	40	1	\$140,000	Private	Chippewa County or MN DNR	Has not begun
Cottage Grove Kiln/Mississippi River	Washington	Adjacent to city-owned Settlers Island, Urmann Ries site, and Moores Park, the acquisition of this parcel would add to the river access trail vision planned by the National Park Service and the City of Cottage Grove. This site is proposed to provide community access to the river for educational and recreational opportunities, and includes the historic Grey Cloud Lime Kiln, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. This is a high priority for Cottage Grove.	Fee Title	7.4	0.2	\$320,000	Private	City of Cottage Grove	Has not begun
Nielson Memorial Preserve/Zumbro River	Goodhue	Directly abutting the recently created Nielson Memorial Preserve, the protection of these parcels will provide	Fee Title	105	0	\$450,000	Private	Goodhue County	Has not begun

		access and additional acreage for this Big Woods refuge located on the North Fork of the Zumbro River.							
Point Douglas/St. Croix River	Washington	Located on the St. Croix River between Carpenter Nature Center to the north and Point Douglas County Park to the south, the acquisition of this parcel would provide fee-title to a trail corridor (addition to St. Croix Valley Regional Trail) and would preserve remnants of mesic oak forest and additional riparian and upland habitat for a variety of wildlife and bird species of greatest conservation need.	Fee Title	41	0.5	\$835,900	Private	Washington County	Has not begun
St. Cloud/Mississippi River	Stearns	Directly abutting the Mississippi River and River Bluffs Regional Park within the City of St. Cloud, these four parcels provide an opportunity for residents to directly access the river.	Fee Title	133	0.75	\$766,000	Private	City of St. Cloud or Stearns County	Has not begun
Timms Creek/Minnesota River	Renville	Identified in the Minnesota River Valley Recreation and Conservation Master Plan, the protection of these parcels will conserve unique and sensitive natural resources while providing increased recreational opportunities.	Fee Title	190	0.75	\$1,000,000	Private	Renville County or MN DNR	Has not begun
Totals				706.6	4.4	\$4,765,900			

Fee Acquisition

1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including an explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.

The proposed parcels have been identified and prioritized in state, regional and local natural resource and recreation plans, as well as through agency and community conversations. These parcels are regarded as priorities for recreational value, high quality natural resources, land that address access gaps, scenic value, and/or water protection. Other prioritization factors are presence of biodiversity significance on site, adjacency to already protected land, level of local support, immediacy of threats, whether we see a pathway to obtain full funding to successfully compete the acquisition, whether the permanent steward will be able to adequately manage the property and fund on-going maintenance, and landowner willingness and timing needs.

2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified for the acquisition purposes you propose. Include the URL to the plan if one is available.

The parcels included in our proposal have been identified through state, county, and local plans as being priorities – plans include:

- o Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas Program Strategic Land Protection Plan
- o Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda: 2015-2025
- o MN State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2014-2018
- o Washington County's Land and Water Legacy Program
- o Mississippi River Partnership Plan for the City of Brainerd
- o Minnesota Great River Road Corridor Management Plan
- o LCCMR – Six-Year Strategic Plan for MN's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
- o Goodhue County Byllesby Park Master Plan
- o Goodhue County Nielsen Memorial Preserve Master Plan
- o Minnesota River Valley Recreation and Conservation Master Plan

3. For any parcels acquired in fee title, a restoration and management plan must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.

Once parcels have been acquired and conveyed to the long-term steward, initial site development and restoration of the property will begin. The Trust for Public Land will work with the long-term steward to complete a restoration and management plan (including how these activities will be funded), and implementation of that plan will be completed in the years following acquisition. Estimated costs for initial development costs of parcels are included in this proposal.

4. For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.

The Trust for Public Land will work with local units of government on the acquisition of these parcels. If required, County Board approval will be obtained.

5. If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction.

Written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [bf500c09-c8d.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

Parcel Overview Map

Financial Capacity

File: [71d420de-b8d.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
TPL Letter Authorizing LCCMR PROTECT Proposal	6b05e73b-3b7.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

Yes: Fee Acquisition,

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

No

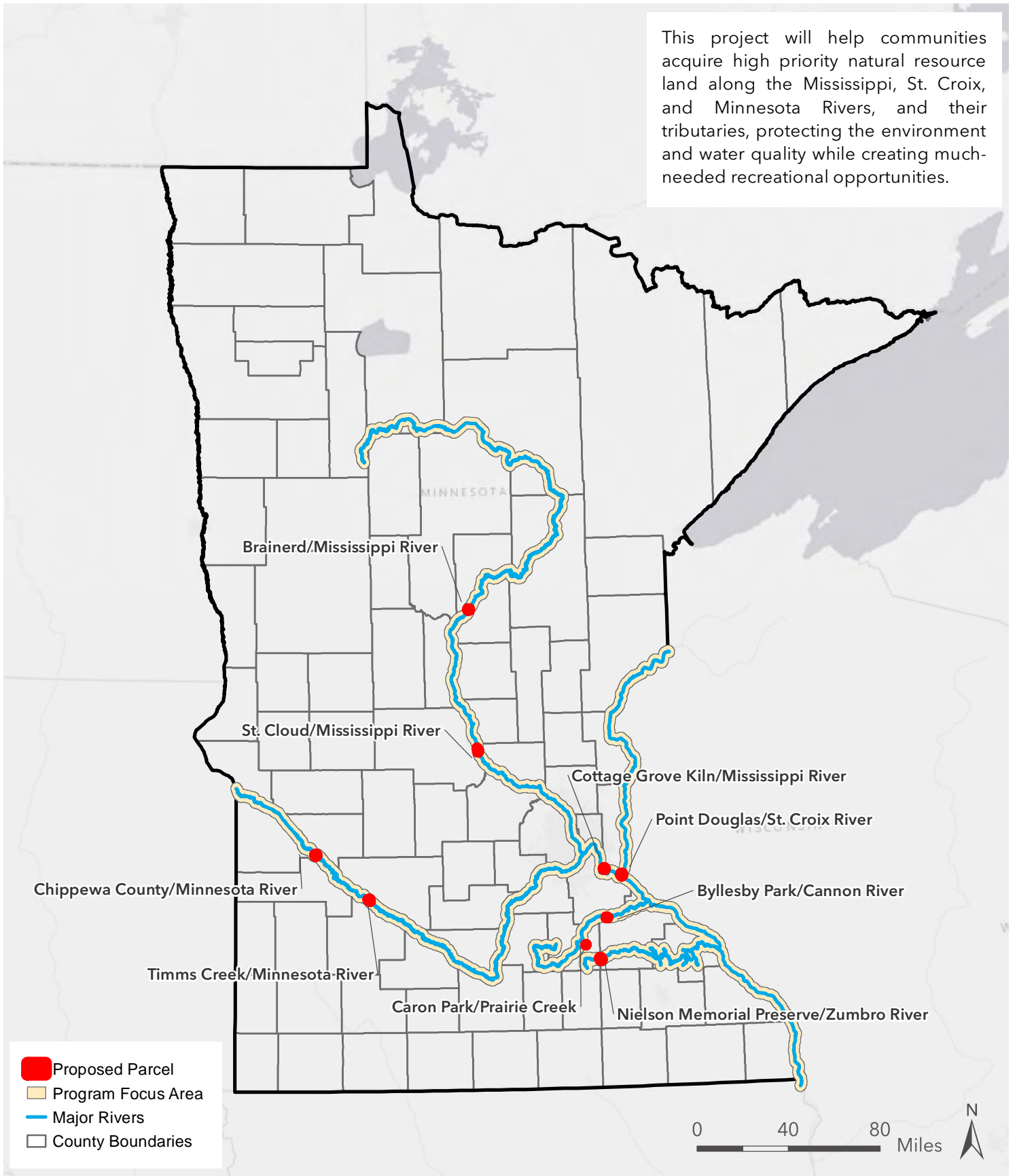
Does your project include research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

This project will help communities acquire high priority natural resource land along the Mississippi, St. Croix, and Minnesota Rivers, and their tributaries, protecting the environment and water quality while creating much-needed recreational opportunities.



Parcel Overview Map



Turning Back to Rivers: Environmental and Recreational Protection

April 15, 2019

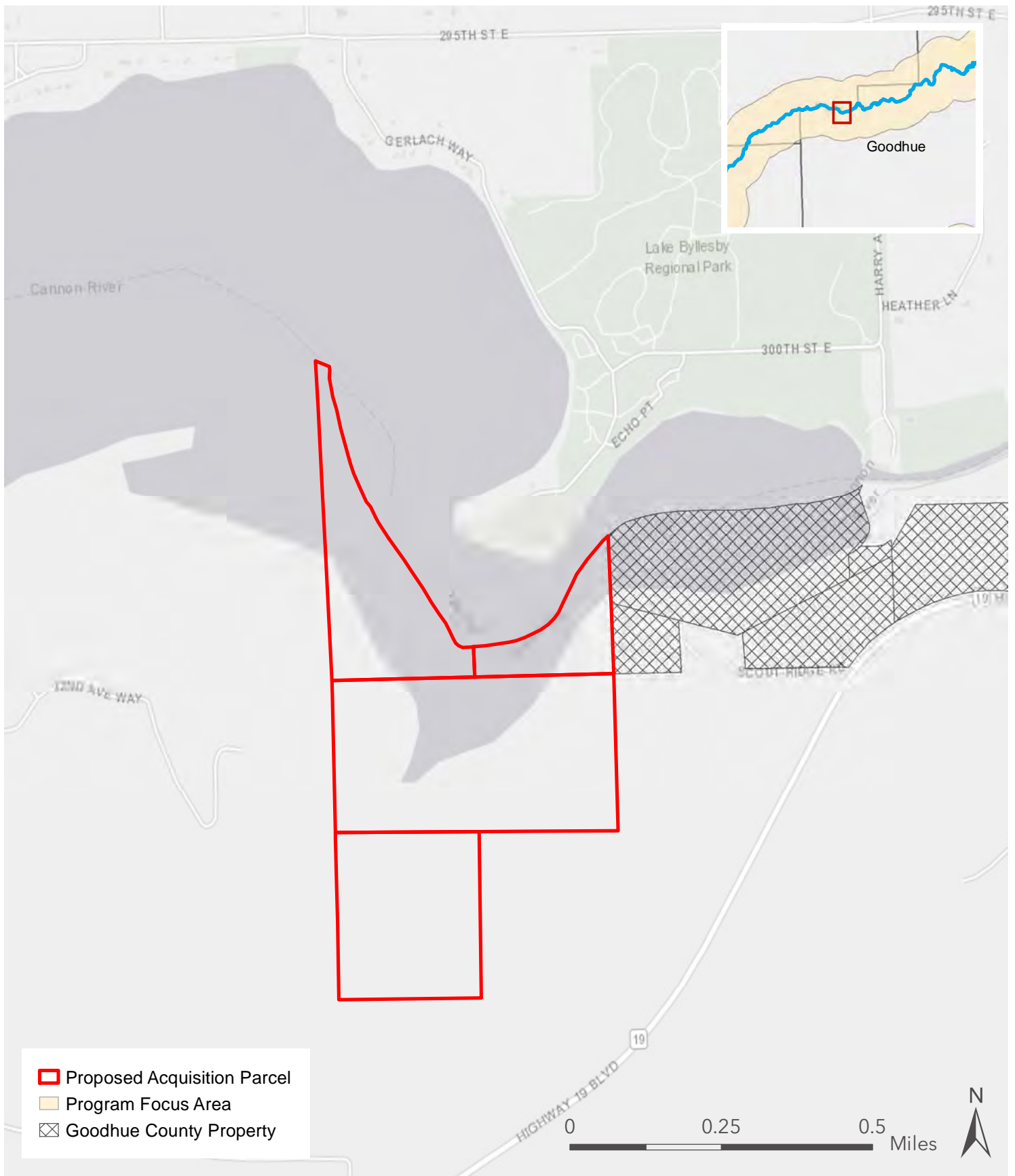
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Brainerd/Mississippi River



Crow Wing County, MN



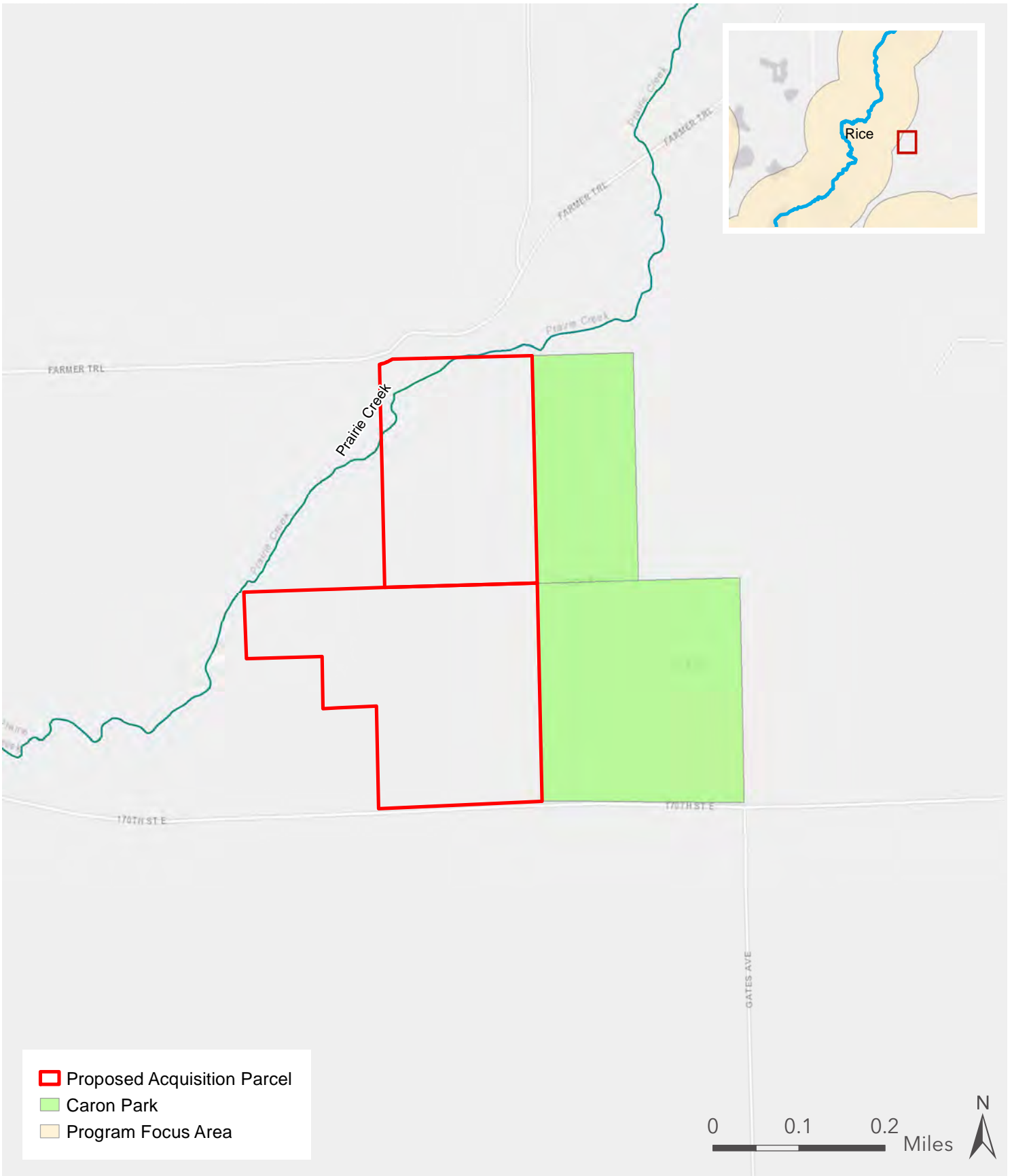
Byllesby Park/Cannon River

Goodhue County, Minnesota



April 15, 2019

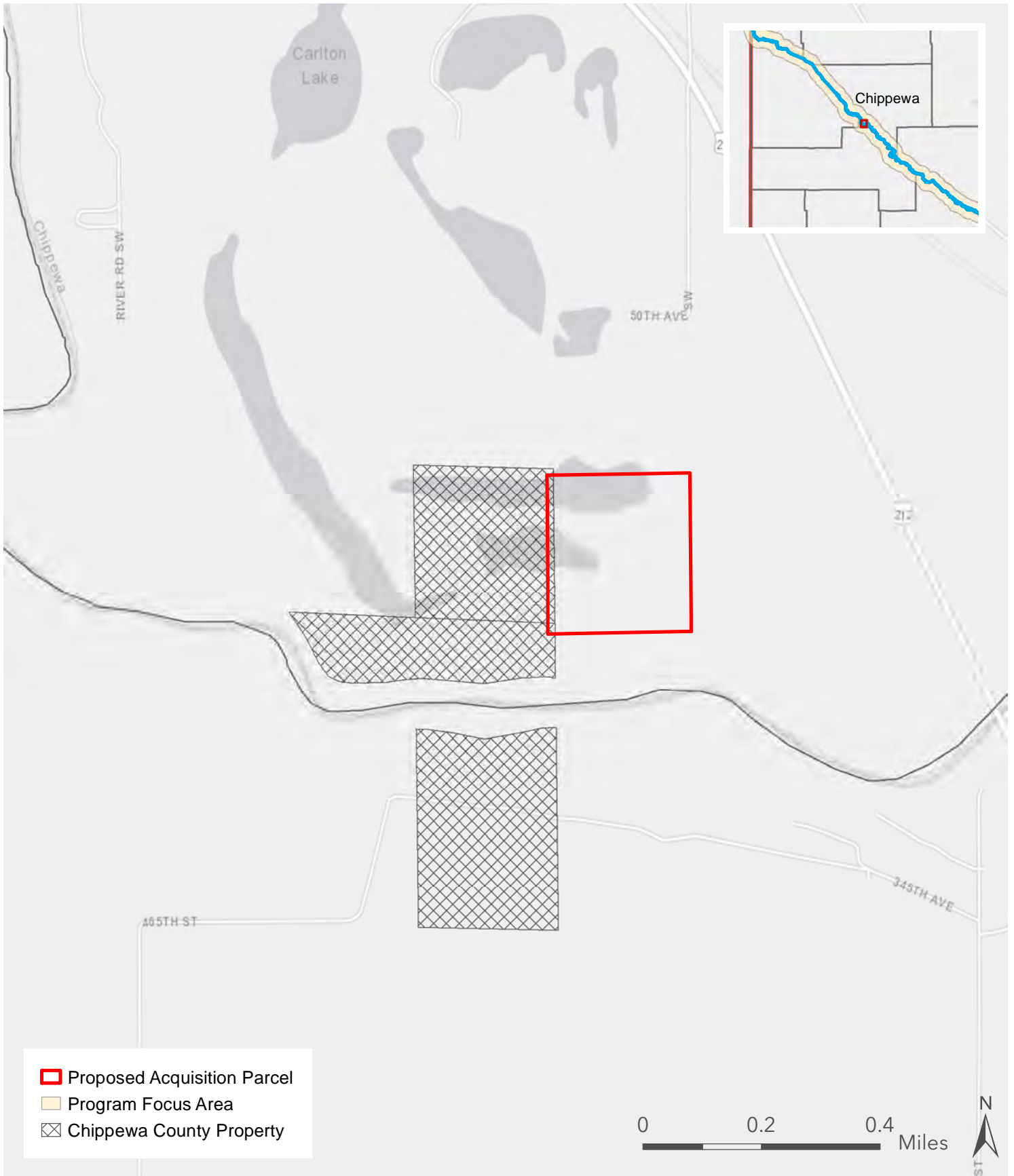
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Caron Park/Prairie Creek

Rice County, MN

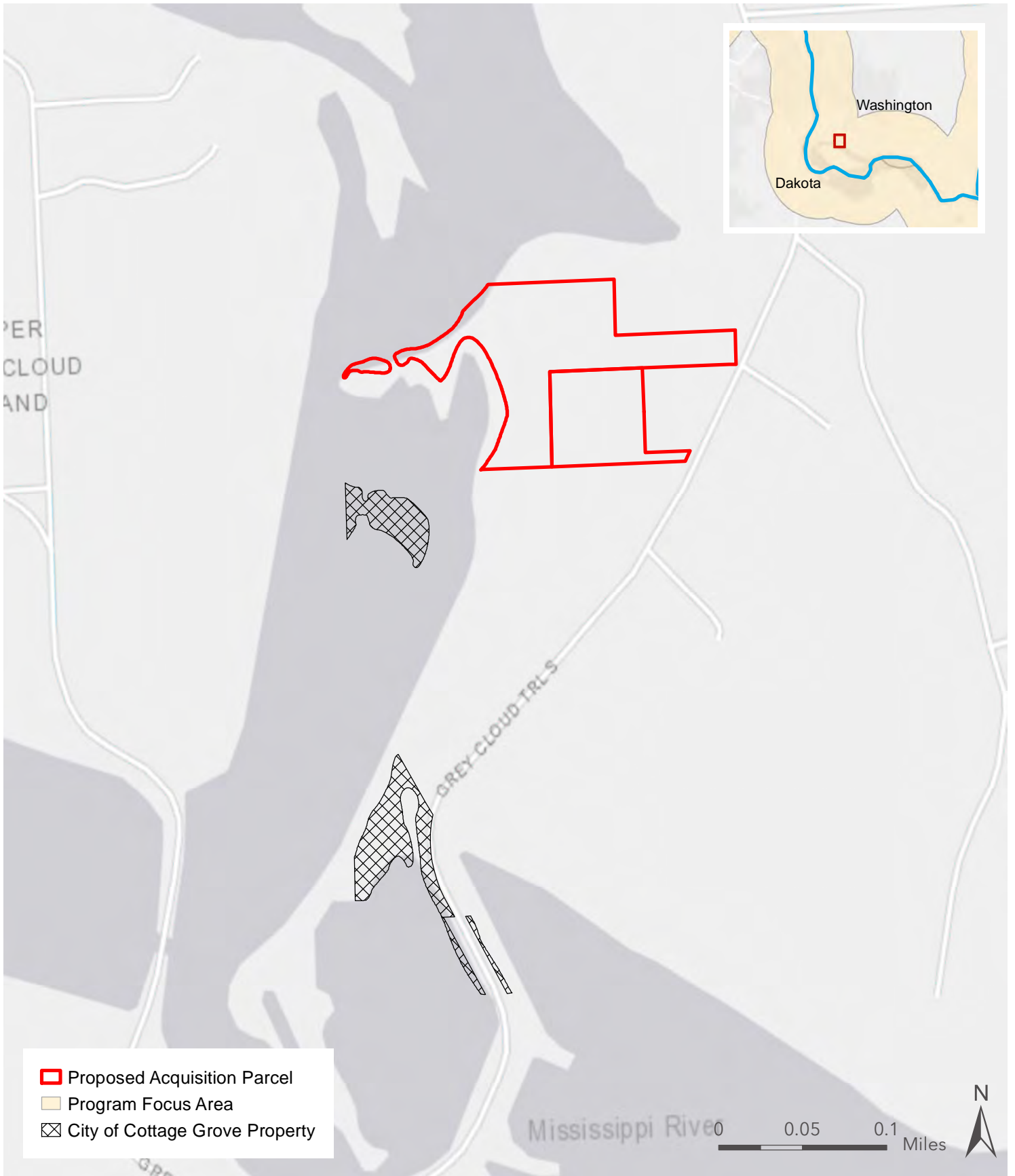




Chippewa County/Minnesota River

Chippewa County, MN





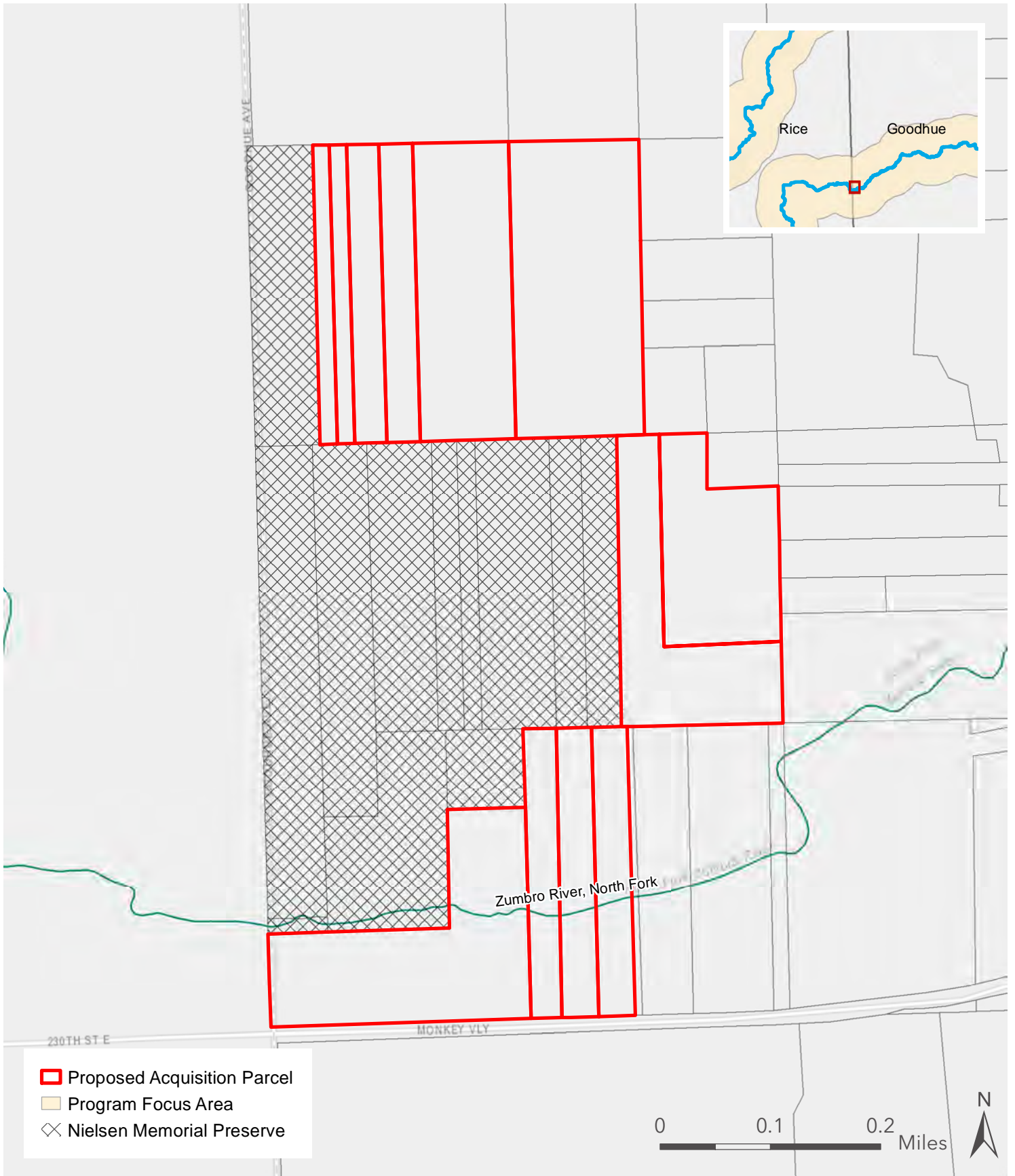
Cottage Grove Kiln/Mississippi River

Washington County, Minnesota



April 15, 2019

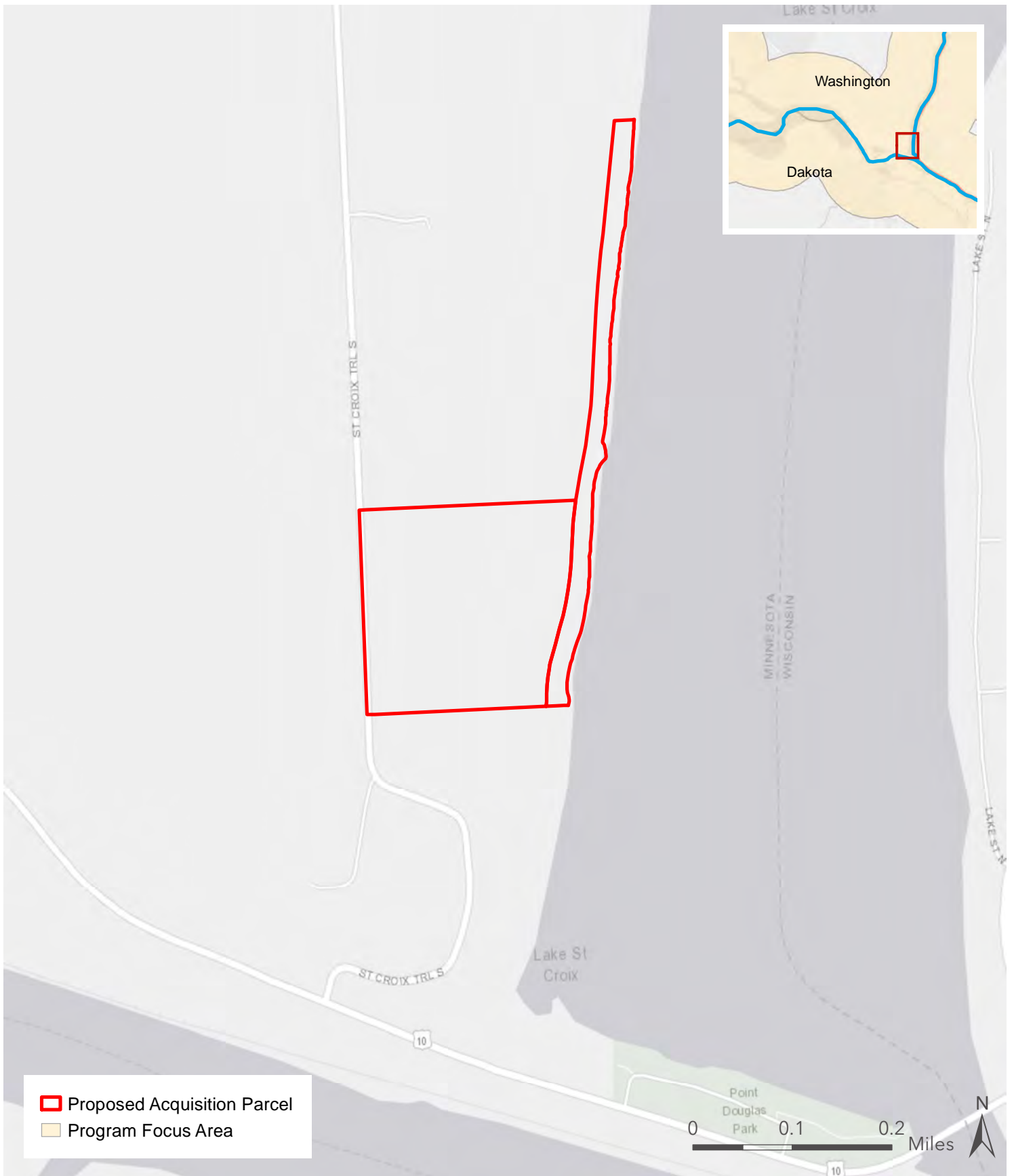
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Nielson Memorial Preserve/Zumbro River

Goodhue County, Minnesota





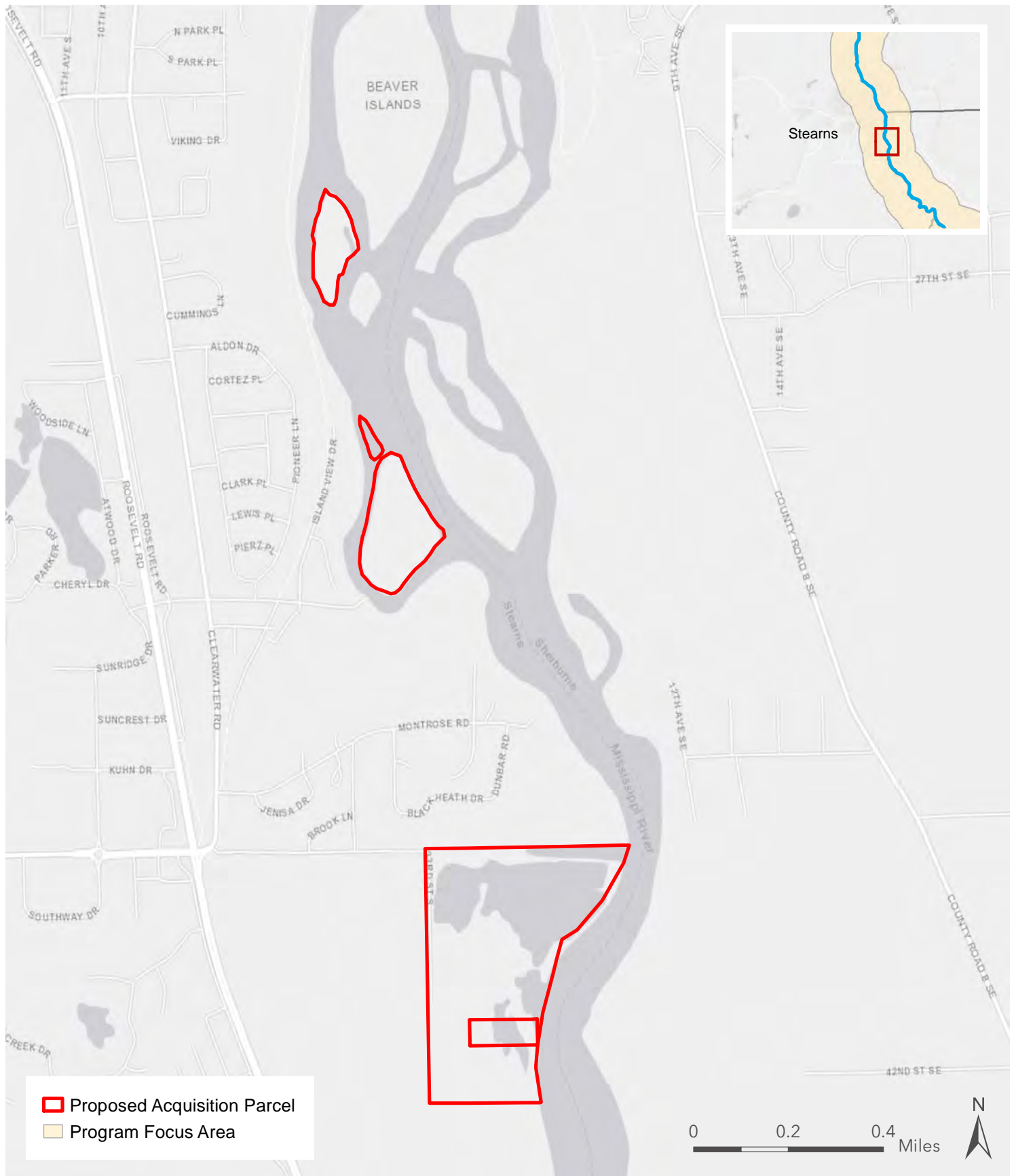
Point Douglas/St. Croix River

Washington County, Minnesota



April 15, 2019

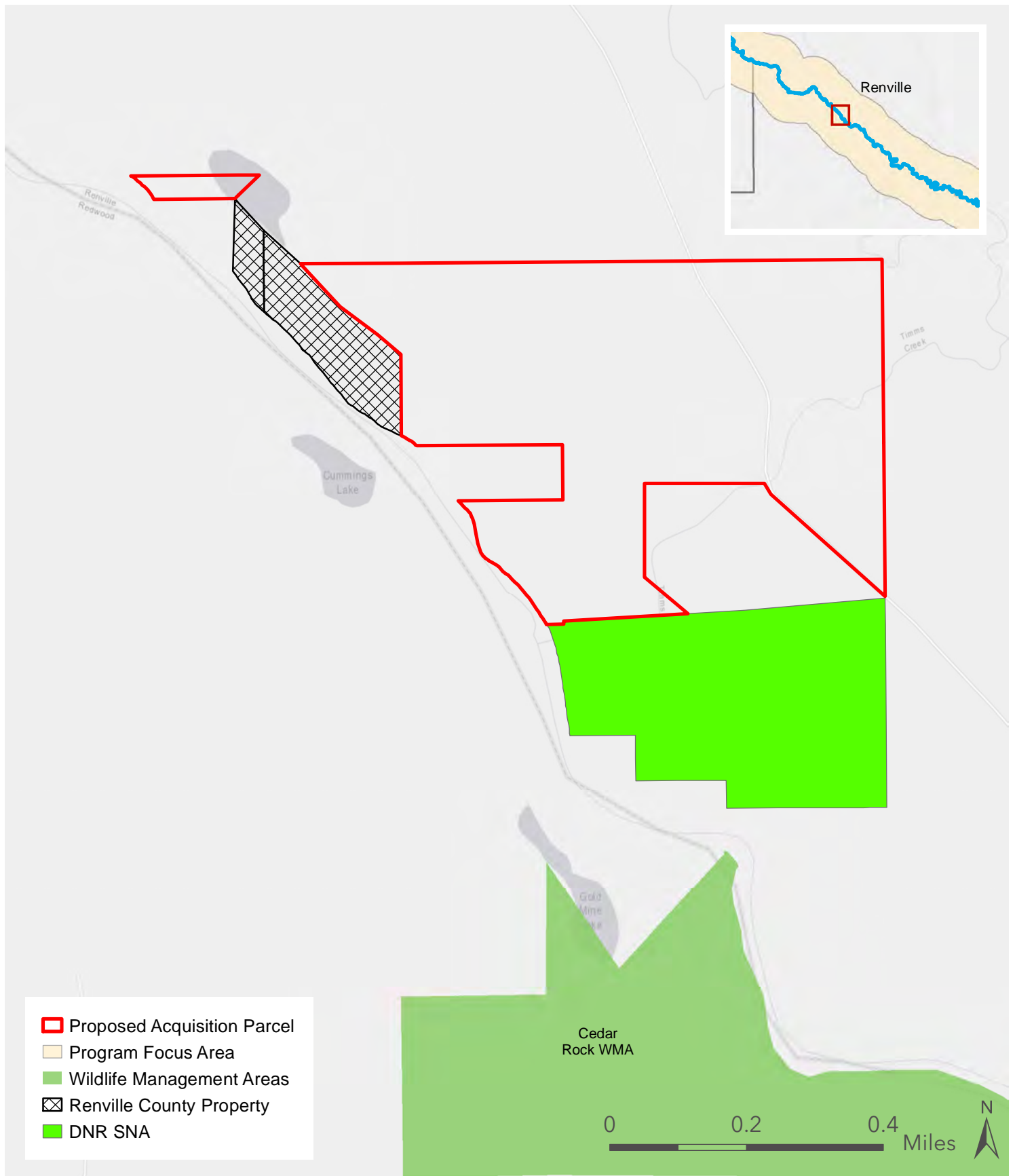
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St. Cloud/Mississippi River

Stearns County, MN





Timms Creek/Minnesota River

Renville County, Minnesota



