

2003 Project Abstract
For the Period Ending June 30, 2006

TITLE: Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors-Friends of the Mississippi River 2.2
PROJECT MANAGER: Tom Lewanski
ORGANIZATION: Friends of the Mississippi River
ADDRESS: 360 North Robert Street, Saint Paul MN 55101
WEB SITE ADDRESS: www.fmr.org
FUND: Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
LEGAL CITATION: ML 2003, Ch. 128, Art. 1, Sec. 9, Subd. 5(b)

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$92,000

Overall Project Outcome and Results

FMR had one result in the Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors project:

Objective: Restore 100 acres of significant habitat, which may include prairie, oak savanna, and deciduous forest and/or wetland communities.

Results: Using such habitat restoration techniques as soil preparation (spraying, burning, disking, dragging) seed drilling, mowing, prescribed burning, spot spraying, installation of native plants, and removal of invasive species, FMR restored 13 acres of prairie, enhanced 165 acres of existing prairie, installed a 1300 foot lakeshore planting, restored 50-acres of wetland, and enhanced 123 acres of woodland. These restoration and enhancement activities represent 12 distinct projects within Dakota and Hennepin Counties (MWC focus areas 5,6,7).

FMR was able to leverage over \$146,000 in non-Metro Wildlife Corridors funding through this project. Of the total 351+ acres that FMR restored during this project, FMR's MWC funds were used to restore 178-acres, while the non-MWC funds were used to restore an additional 173-acres.

Each of these twelve projects are ecologically significant because the restoration and enhancement that took place at these sites not only improved and increased important wildlife habitat, but many of them provide water quality benefits as well. Eleven of the twelve projects are adjacent to bodies of water. Eight of the restoration project sites were located within a designated Greenway in Dakota County.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

FMR utilized hundreds of volunteers for restoration activities during this project. In addition, FMR placed articles about these projects in its newsletters and on it's webpage. For two webpage examples, visit:

http://www.fmr.org/profile_mar_2005.html

http://www.fmr.org/gqua0106_2.html

Several newspaper articles also appeared in area newspapers regarding FMR's restoration projects. For an example, visit:

<http://www.thisweek-online.com/2006/January/13Wiklund.html>

Tom HD:Users:tomlewanski:Documents:Toms Shared Files:LCMR Projects:Metro Corridors Project:final report

FINAL REPORT

AUG 16 2006

LCMR 2003 Work Program

Date of Report: June 30, 2006

Date of Next Status Report: LCMR Final Work Program Report

Date of Work program Approval: July 9, 2003

Project Completion Date: June 30, 2006

I. PROJECT TITLE: Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors-Friends of the Mississippi River 2.2

3. Rice, Clearwater, and Hardwood Creek
5. Upper Mississippi River
6. Lower Mississippi River
7. Vermillion River
9. Scott County

Project Manager: Tom Lewanski

Affiliation: Friends of the Mississippi River

Mailing Address: 360 North Robert Street

City / State / Zip: Saint Paul, MN 55101

Telephone Number: 651-222-2193 Ext. 12

E-mail Address: tlewansk@fmr.org

FAX Number: 651-222-6005

Web Page address: www.fmr.org

Total Biennial LCMR Project Budget:	LCMR Appropriation:	\$ 92,000
	Minus Amount Spent:	\$ 90,897
	Equal Balance:	\$ 1,103

Legal Citation: ML 2003, Chp. 128, Art. 1, Sec. 9, Subd. 05b

Appropriation Language: (b) Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors \$2,425,000 the first year and \$2,425,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources. ~~\$3,700,000~~ \$3,550,000 of this appropriation is for acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements with the Trust for Public Land, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Friends of the Mississippi River, Great River Greening, Minnesota Land Trust, and Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Trust, Inc., for the purposes of planning, improving, and protecting important natural areas in the metropolitan region, as defined by Minnesota Statutes, section 473.121, subdivision 2, through grants, contracted services, conservation easements, and fee acquisition. \$500,000 of this appropriation is for an agreement with the city of Ramsey for the Trott Brook Corridor acquisition. \$800,000 of this appropriation is for an agreement with the Rice Creek Watershed District for Hardwood Creek acquisition and restoration. Land acquired with this appropriation must be sufficiently improved to meet at least minimum management standards as determined by the commissioner of natural resources. As part of the required work program, criteria and priorities for planned acquisition and restoration activities must be submitted to the legislative commission on Minnesota resources for review and approval before expenditure. Expenditures are limited to the identified project areas as defined in the work program. This appropriation may not be used for the purchase of residential structures unless expressly approved in the work program. Any land acquired in fee title by the commissioner of natural resources with money from this appropriation must be designated: (1) as an outdoor recreation unit under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.07; or (2) as provided in Minnesota Statutes, sections 89.018, subdivision 2, paragraph (a); 97A.101; 97A.125; 97C.001; and 97C.011. The commissioner may so designate any lands acquired in less than fee title. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2006, at which time the project must be completed and final products delivered, unless an earlier date is specified in the work program.

II. & III Final PROJECT SUMMARY:

Overall Project Outcome and Results

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Each of these twelve projects are ecologically significant because the restoration and enhancement that took place at these sites not only improved and increased

important wildlife habitat, but many of them provide water quality benefits as well. Eleven of the twelve projects are adjacent to bodies of water. Eight of the restoration project sites were located within a designated Greenway in Dakota County.

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- <http://www.thisweek-online.com/2006/January/13Wiklund.html>

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

Result 1: Restore 100 acres of significant habitat.

Description: FMR will restore 100 acres of significant habitat using established management tools and by planting native plants. Native communities to be restored may include prairie, savanna, deciduous forest, and/or wetlands.

Summary Budget Information for Result 1:	LCMR Budget	<u>\$92,000</u>
	Balance	<u>\$ 1,103</u>

Completion Date:

- We anticipate that by June 30, 2004 15 acres of significant habitat will be restored.
- We anticipate that by June 30, 2005 an additional 45 acres of significant habitat will be restored.
- We anticipate that by June 30, 2006 an additional 40 acres of significant habitat will be restored, bring the total acres restored at the end of grant period to 100.

Final Report Summary:

Overall Project Outcome and Results

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- Benjamin – prairie installation. Non-MWC funding - \$3,000.
- Robinson – prescribed burn on native prairie.
- Wiklund/Rosemount Wildlife Preserve – prairie installation, exotic removal in existing woodland. Non-MWC funding - \$6,000.
- Spring Lake Park Reserve – exotic removal in existing woodland. Non-MWC funding - \$5,000.
- Sand Coulee (2) – woody plant removal and prescribed burns on native prairie. Non-MWC funding - \$15,000.
- Pine Bend Bluffs - exotic removal in existing woodland and initiation of prairie installation. Non-MWC funding - \$65,285.
- Hastings Riverflats Park – wet meadow and mesic prairie installation, wetland planting. Non-MWC funding - \$43,750.
- Mississippi River Gorge Regional Park – oak savanna restoration
- Karpen – exotic removal and planting in existing woodland. Non-MWC funding - \$2,500
- Empire Wastewater Treatment Plant (2) – prairie planting, wetland restoration, exotic removal along Vermillion River. Non-MWC funding - \$6,200.

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Each of these twelve projects are ecologically significant because the restoration and enhancement that took place at these sites not only improved and increased important wildlife habitat, but many of them provide water quality benefits as well. Eleven of the twelve projects are adjacent to bodies of water. Eight of the restoration project sites were located within a designated Greenway in Dakota County and seven of the restoration sites are open to be enjoyed by the public.

A budget change was requested on August 3. Tom Lewanski discussed this request with Susan Thornton of the LCMR staff. Permission was granted. This workplan and attachment A reflect this budget change.

At the end of the project FMR left \$1,103 of its \$92,000 allotment unspent. This was the result of the actual cost for contractor work being less than what the bid amount was.

V. TOTAL LCMR PROJECT BUDGET (BASED ON REQUESTED 6/30/06 BUDGET CHANGES):

All Results: Personnel: \$ \$18,190

All Results: Equipment: \$

All Results: Development (subcontractors): \$ 68,180.

All Results: Acquisition: \$

All Results: Other: Travel: \$600. Materials through vendors (seeds, plants, herbicide): \$5,030.

TOTAL LCMR PROJECT BUDGET: See Attachment A

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$3,500: No capital expenditures will be made as part of this project.

VI. PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE SPENDING:

A. Past Spending:

The following projects reflect work that FMR has conducted in Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridor Project focus areas. Because FMR has not chosen specific project sites, LCMR funds may or may not be spent on these projects.

Flint Hills Resources: 2001 - \$50,000 (For restoration on their bluffland property)
2002 - \$50,000 (For restoration on their bluffland property)

Metropolitan Environmental Partners Grant: \$76,000 (For streambank and buffer restoration)

Gorge Stewards: \$14,500 (Restoration in the Mississippi River gorge in Minneapolis)

Minnesota DNR Prairie stewardship: \$5,000. (Prairie restoration in Ravenna Township-Dakota County)

Department of Natural Resources/Prairie Stewardship Grant - \$5,000
(Prairie restoration in Ravenna Township)

B. Current Spending:

The following projects reflect work that FMR will conduct in Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridor Project focus areas during the life of this LCMR grant. Because FMR has not chosen specific project sites, LCMR funds may or may not be spent on these projects.

North American Wetland Conservation act Grant (NAWCA) - \$43,000
(Habitat restoration at the Hastings Riverflats Park site)

Flint Hills Resources: \$100,000 (For restoration on their bluffland property)

Metropolitan Environmental Partners Grant: \$250,000
(wetland and prairie restoration, streambank stabilization/restoration)

C. Required Match (if applicable): No match is required.

D. Future Spending:

Flint Hills Resources - \$50,000 annually for restoration on their bluffland property.

VII. Project Partners:**A. Partners Receiving LCMR Funds**

FMR has not selected specific project sites for the Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors Project. Therefore the specific restoration activities have not been determined. Based on final project site selections and their restoration needs, FMR will seek bids and enter into contracts with vendors to perform these activities. See attachment A.

B. Project Cooperators:

- Metropolitan Council
- Flint Hills Resources
- The City of Hastings
- 3M
- Dakota County Parks
- Great River Greening
- DNR
- Rice Creek Watershed District
- Minneapolis Park Board
- Longfellow Community Council
- Seward Neighborhood Group
- Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association
- Desnoyer Park Improvement Association
- Merriam Park Community Council
- Macalaster Groveland Community Council

- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
- Mississippi Watershed Management Organization
- City of St. Paul Division of Parks and Recreation
- MNRRA
- Hastings High School

VIII. DISSEMINATION: DNR website: www.dnr.state.mn.us. Information on the project will also be discussed in FMR's newsletter and will posted on FMR's website: www.fmr.org See overall work program for more details on dissemination.

IX. LOCATION:

Focus Area number/ name

- 3. Rice, Clearwater, and Hardwood Creek
- 5. Upper Mississippi River
- 6. Lower Mississippi River
- 7. Vermillion River
- 9. Scott County

X. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: Periodic work program progress reports will be submitted not later than *February 1, 2004, August 1, 2004, February 1, 2005, August 1, 2005, February 1, 2006, August 1, 2006*. A final work program report and associated products will be submitted by June 30, 2006.

XI. Budget. See attachment A for budget details.

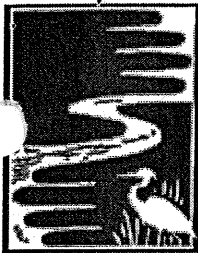
Attachment A: Budget Detail for 2003 Projects - Summary and a Budget page for each partner

Proposal Title: Metropolitan Area Wildlife Corridors-Friends of the Mississippi River 2.2

Project Manager Name: Tom Lewanski

CMR Requested Dollars: \$92,000

2003 LCMR Proposal Budget	<u>Result 1 Budget:</u>	<u>Requested budget change (6/30/06)</u>	<u>Amount spent to date (6/30/06)</u>	<u>Final project balance</u>
BUDGET ITEM				
PERSONNEL: Staff Expenses, wages, salaries – Be specific on who is paid \$, to do what? Make each person paid a separate line item				
Conservation Director	5,400	6,290	6,290	0
Restoration Ecologist	9,548	9,301	9,037	264
PERSONNEL: Staff benefits – Be specific; list benefits for each person on a separate line item				0
Conservation Director:(Dental, Health, long-term disability, workers comp)	900	1083	1,083	0
Restoration Ecologist:(Dental, Health, long-term disability, workers comp)	1,452	1516	1,516	0
Personnel subtotal	17,300	18,190	17,926	264
Contracts				0
Professional/technical (with whom?, Other contracts: FMR will seek bids and contract with (a) vendor(s) for soil preparation (burning, herbicide spraying, discing, etc), seed planting, prescribed burning, mowing, and exotic woody plant removal services.	68,180	68,180	67,996	184
Space rental: NOT ALLOWED				0
Other direct operating costs: seed, plant material, herbicide, etc.	5,920	5030	4,401	629
Equipment / Tools (what equipment? Give a general description and cost)				0
Printing				0
Advertising				0
Communications, telephone, mail, etc.				0
Office Supplies (list specific categories)				0
Other Supplies (list specific categories)				0
Travel expenses in Minnesota	600	600	575	25
Travel outside Minnesota (where?)				0
Construction (for what?)				0
Other land improvement (for what?)				0
Other (Describe the activity and cost)				0
COLUMN TOTAL	92,000	92,000	90,897	1,103



Gorge Stewards Quarterly

Winter 2006

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Native Shrubs Adorn Popular Pathway

The pedestrian and biking trails adjacent to West River Parkway are some of the most heavily used in the Minneapolis Park system. Neighbors venture out on bikes, skates, or on foot with their pets in large numbers each day.

In October Gorge Stewards added some native shrubs to an area near the popular path between 36th and 37th Streets recently cleared of the invasive buckthorn and some aggressive vine ground cover. Foray leaders and park staff cleared the area that was on its way to becoming a buckthorn thicket, and 15 Gorge Stewards joined forces to plant, mulch, and water 20 woody plants native to the area: American hazelnut, smooth wild rose, pagoda dogwood, chokecherry, red-berried elder, and prickly gooseberry.



Mulch helps retain moisture and prevents weed growth.

The specimens were a bit spindly and bereft of leaves at the time of planting in October, but many of these native species will reward us with a spring display of blooms and a fall exhibition of richly-colored berries that are a winter foodsource for wildlife. In an urban yard, mature shrubs can also provide privacy and increased energy efficiency when planted on the northwest side of your property.

Consider Minnesota native shrubs in your own residential landscape:

- Outback Nursery
- Native Trees and Shrubs list at the Minnesota DNR Web Site
- Friends of the Parks Guide to Native Shrub Alternatives

Gorge Stewards' native shrub favorites

Red-twigged dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)



"I like the winter color of Red-osier dogwood. It's a sign of life in the drab winter landscape." — Kate

American cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*)

"I think horticulturist Michael Dirr said it best: 'A garden without a viburnum is akin to life without music and art.'" — Ann

Musclewood (*Carpinus caroliniana*)

"The trunk of this large shrub looks like muscle-y limbs. Plus it has great fall color!" — Grace



Shrub planting is for the very young and the less young!

This restoration project was funded by Friends of the Mississippi River through the Metro Wildlife Corridors project (MWC). Funding for MWC was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR).



Fifteen Gorge Stewards turned out on the last Saturday in October.



Choose Minnesota native shrubs for your own residential landscape.

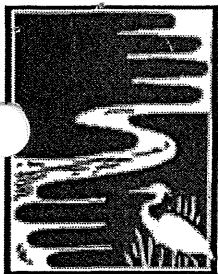
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FMR Home

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Friends of the Mississippi River
Page last updated 11 January 2006





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FMR Home > Protecting Riverfront Land > Landowner Profile: Aina Wiklund

Aina Wiklund

On a bright summer morning, Aina spotted a deer nibbling morsels from her garden. She didn't clap her hands or shout to shoo it away because, she says, animals are her friends. Instead, she told the deer in a reprimanding but kind voice, "Go away. Go away from there." The deer stared at her with what appeared to be careful consideration, and then turned its back to the garden to graze nearby.



A view of the oak woodland on the Wiklund property. Buckthorn removal in the woodland is underway, which will clear the understory for other native plants.

Aina Wiklund has many such stories that define the relationship she has developed with the animals on her land, a place where she has lived for forty years. Her twenty-five acres in Rosemount, a fast-growing suburb in Dakota County, form an oasis of nearly undisturbed land in an evaporating native landscape.

Through an agreement forged by Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR), the DNR, the City of Rosemount and Dakota County, Aina plans to preserve her land in its natural state, she hopes permanently. FMR Conservation Director Tom Lewanski encouraged Aina to attend a meeting for landowners interested in preserving their land. Citizens of Dakota County have passed a referendum to secure farmland and natural areas for preservation, despite the tax increases required to fund them and opposition from special interests. These funds are available to protect important natural areas in the county. Aina was immediately interested.



With financial support from the Dakota County Farmland and Natural Area Program, the Department of Natural



This large buckthorn bush - as big as a tree - is typical of the buckthorn on the Wiklund property. The restoration plan includes removing this invasive exotic species.

Resource's Metro Greenways Program and the City of Rosemount, Aina has placed a conservation easement over the entire property. The conservation easement permanently protects the property from development. In addition, FMR developed a management plan for the property that provides guidance on how the natural areas will be restored and maintained.

Restoration has already begun. FMR, with funding provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources through the DNR's Metro Greenways Program and Metro Wildlife Corridors, is in the process of restoring approximately seven acres of hayfield to native prairie. In keeping

with Aina's land ethic, no herbicides were used to prepare the site. Instead the soil was tilled several times during the 2004 growing season and planted with prairie seeds during the fall. Restoration activities will begin in 2005 to improve the ecological health of the forested portion of the property. This work will include removing exotic invasive plants like buckthorn and honeysuckle and planting native species. Funding for this project is being provided by the Upper Mississippi River Forestry Partnership's Neotropical Migratory and Forest Bird Habitat Program.

Several large windows in Aina's house overlook this field and the woodlands that surround it. She remembers how, a couple years ago, a Thanksgiving parade of wild turkeys proudly trotted through the field two days before the holiday. At that time there were a strutting handful, but by the following spring, two dozen of the comical birds came to visit.

To meet Aina, one is struck by the simplicity and



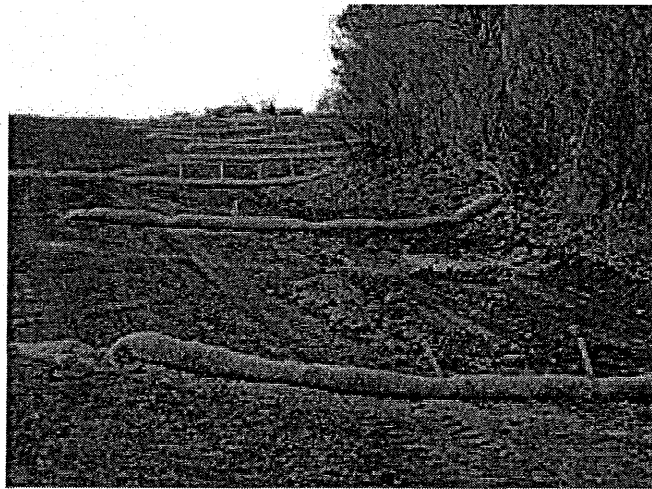
This field, photographed before restoration work began, has since been disced and seeded with native prairie grasses. At the land

richness of her house and property. The white cottage

owner's request, the restoration was completed without the use of any chemical herbicides.

is clean and well cared for, but not fussy. You won't find the latest gadget, but will find a philodendron plant that winds itself multiple times around the interior, tacked carefully to the walls where they meet the ceiling. Furnished in the blue and white of her Swedish heritage, the house is sparingly appointed with older, sturdy furniture in its sun-filled rooms. A basket of hand knit slippers awaits visitors at the front door.

It does not take long to discover that the way she lives perfectly reflects her values about the earth and the responsibility we all have to care for it, focusing on preservation rather than consumption. Aina sees that, regrettably, too many people have lost sight of those values. "Comparing our lifetime to the age of the earth, our life lasts barely as long as it takes to bat an eyelid," comments Aina. "Still, during that brief appearance, we believe it to be our right to do anything we want with the earth for a paper money profit."



These "Stenlogs" are embedded in the hillside as part of the restoration work. They will reduce erosion of the hillside during rain and snow melt.

Growing up in Sweden, Aina developed an early appreciation for the value of nature. Scandinavian countries value the land in both practical and romantic ways, she says. Strict environmental laws protect the land, water and air, while artists invoke nature as the basis for beauty and romance.

Aina's land ethic has been profoundly influenced by her numerous relationships with Native Americans. "Many years ago," Aina recounts, "I got acquainted with some Native Americans on the same

ship to Sweden. I have never forgotten one thing they told me: 'To sell land is as unthinkable to us as to sell water or air.'"

She understands their spiritual connection to the land. The respect she has for her own land is evident in the way she cares for and honors its natural beauty and rhythms. She grieves to see land cut apart for development — for the money to be made — changing its topography forever. "When I see wonderful land being leveled, beautiful trees cut down and wildlife driven out or killed to fill the land with rows of houses like barracks on a tundra, I feel sad, that money, which loses its value, is considered worth more than the ancient land," she laments.

Natural diversity abounds on Aina's property — in the prairie being restored and the untouched woodlands with natural ponds, in the two ponds she has created near the house and in the gently mown paths that lead around her property. When guests walk on the land or the road alongside, they say it seems like an area forgotten by developers.

The ponds Aina installed near the house connect her to the sea of her childhood growing up in Sweden. Each pond is edged in stones dug from her property and some have trickling waterfalls. She created them with seating areas and walkways that offer an inviting place to enjoy the beauty of the landscape from many perspectives.

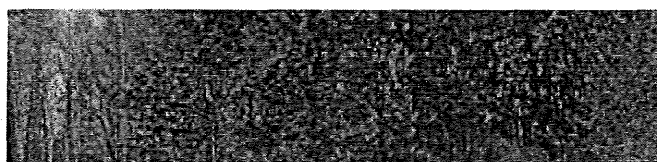


Native prairie seed is spread as part of the restoration of a field at the site.

The main path on the property meanders past vegetable gardens on its way to a former sheep pasture that now serves as a respite for friends and guests to enjoy the land and sky and air. On a gentle hill in a clearing stand several makeshift tables for casual gatherings, and an old fire grate leans against a tree, beckoning images of evening gatherings around a fire, the sun setting and the stars beginning to appear. Torchieri lanterns stand around the edge, like ushers awaiting guests.

In the forty years Aina has lived on this property, she has developed a relationship with the land and wildlife unlike most in these days of ever expanding development. When she bought the land forty years ago, there were no plowable roads into her property. During the winter she skied in and out to get to town. Now a road runs along the edge of her property. As new housing encroaches all around her, she sees more wildlife on her property seeking to escape the destruction of their habitat.

"With the rapid development in this area, I have found more wildlife lingering on my property. Besides deer, who leave their fawns near the house, and whom I have talked to for many years, now wild turkeys are seen around the house almost daily. Opossum, skunk, even mink are seen doing their rounds and chores here," she says.



Aina not only knows many of her animal neighbors, she has come to know some of her human neighbors as well. She has a sense of their



Straw mulch will reduce erosion of the topsoil until the restored native vegetation is well-established.

intentions toward their land. Her wish is that they, too, will work to protect the land from development and destruction, but knows this is unlikely for most. She is pleased to see that some share her land ethic, such as the family who live on eight adjoining acres "in the woods" as she describes them. But she worries about the rush to develop the land,

which now commands a high price. And she worries that the current five-acre minimum for parcels will change to accommodate the pressure of developers.

Aina's intent in preserving this sliver of creation for future generations is to provide them with a snapshot of what the land was once like. "It feels very good to have this little spot of land saved as a wildlife sanctuary and restored prairie. Future generations can get an idea of how beautiful all the land around here once was."

Her hope is that others around her and in similar situations will be inspired to do the same, to come to know the value of the land far beyond its monetary value. Aina says, "Indigenous people all over the world seem to know and respect the will of the Creator. They have it in their oral tradition. Those who have a bible have had it in writing since the time of Moses and know that the human family was to be stewards of the earth and its creatures."

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Restoration begins on area woodlands

Posted: 1/13/06

by Pam Rutyna
Thisweek Newspapers

At its City Council meeting last week, the city of Rosemount accepted the \$40,000 quote from Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) to restore 10 acres of woodlands on the Wiklund property in northern Rosemount.

The money is part of a grant that the city received from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to restore the woodlands.

According to Dan Schultz, Rosemount's director of Parks and Recreation, FMR not only provided the lowest quote, it is also familiar with the Wiklund area, having done prior restoration work on the property.

"It [FMR] is involved with other areas on the land, and the staff has done restoration before, including the controlled burning. They are good at what they do and have the experience we were looking for," he said. "In the city of Rosemount, we don't have the qualified staff to restore the land, so we decided to contract out."

In the spring of 2005, the city of Rosemount, along with the DNR and Dakota County, purchased a conservation easement for Aina Wiklund's land.

"I wanted my land to be protected by a conservation easement because I have seen so much beautiful land leveled, and so many wonderful trees cut down, there's no room left for wildlife," said Wiklund.

She, in turn, donated more than 15 acres of the property to the city. These 10 acres of woodlands are part of that donated land.

"I donated the land because I had a chance to leave a legacy," said Wiklund. "But the conservation easement still stands. This land will not be used for trails or people's leisure activities, it is for wildlife survival."

The restoration

According to Tom Lewanski, conservation director for the FMR, the pre-settlement vegetation of the woodlands was oak savanna. "The oak savanna was where the tall grass prairie reached the deciduous forest," he said.

When restoring the woodlands, the FMR first plans to reduce the impact of invasive species in the area. "By taking out the invasive species, such as the buckthorn trees, we're getting one step closer to restoring it," said Karen Schik, restoration ecologist for FMR and project manager for the Wiklund property.

In order to rid the woodlands of buckthorn trees, FMR is first cutting them down, and then applying a herbicide on the stump.

"Aina was concerned about us using chemicals on the native plants," said Schik. "We talked to her about using it in small amounts and she seemed OK with it."

And while the FMR plans to cut the trees down, Schik said there are more seedlings on the ground, which will be

controlled by fire. "We use fire as a management tool," she said. "Historically, nature used fire to manage and control its surroundings."

Once the invasive plants have been removed, the FMR plans to plant native shrubs to create diversity. "The more diverse plants you have the more diverse the animals become," said Lewanski.

The FMR also plans to seed native woodland plants as well in the area. Common to the woodland are such species as red oak, bur oak and aspen trees.

Along with restoring the woodlands, FMR has been working with Wiklund to restore the seven acres of prairie land on her property. The prairie portion is located on the parcel of land that Wiklund kept.

In the fall of 2004, the FMR restored the prairie land by burning a hayfield and re-seeding it with prairie grasses.

Funding for the entire restoration project is made possible by the following partners: the Upper Mississippi River Forestry Partnership-Neotropical Migratory Birds Program; the Metro Wildlife Corridors with funding from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR). Wiklund has also provided some funding as well.

The preservation

According to Lewanski, preserving the woodlands means protecting the wildlife as well. "Wildlife needs the woodlands for its habitat, migration, feeding and protection against bad weather," he said. "Species also use Aina's land to move in the landscape. By restoring the environment, animals are then able to repopulate the area."

While Schik and Lewanski both agree that not every piece of land can be protected, they stress that it is important to preserve what they can as it benefits the community as a whole.

"The woodlands and prairie help to soften the hard edges of development," said Schik. "These areas are part of our natural heritage. There are 2 percent of quality natural areas left in Dakota County and that's decreasing every year."

In order to increase that number, the FMR continues to work with land owners such as Wiklund to educate and help them protect their land.

"Sometimes we treat land as merchandise," said Wiklund. "We don't think of it for future generations. We need to save the land before it's gone."

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