

DATE OF REPORT: June 30, 1993

LCMR WORK PROGRAM 1991

I. Mississippi River Valley Blufflands Initiative- Recreation 50

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A. M.L. 91 Chpt. 254, Art. 1, Sect. 14, Subd. 3(f)

Appropriation: \$150,000
Balance: \$0

Mississippi River Valley Blufflands Initiative: This appropriation is from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources to assist local units of government to develop the tools necessary to protect the outstanding scenic and biological resources of the blufflands of the Mississippi Valley in Goodhue, Wabasha, Winona and Houston counties.

B. Not applicable.

C. Not applicable.

II. Narrative

The blufflands in the Mississippi River Valley counties of Goodhue, Wabasha, Winona and Houston are unique scenic and biological resources that are of immeasurable importance to the tourist economy of Southeastern Minnesota and contain among the most diverse biological habitats in the state. The area is increasingly threatened by development. The initiative will provide coordination and expertise to assist local officials in developing appropriate land use controls, in identifying critical habitats, and in improving citizen stewardship of the blufflands.

III. Objectives

A. Develop coordinated land use controls

A.1. Narrative: Provide technical assistance to local governments in Goodhue, Wabasha, Winona and Houston counties and develop land use controls and development standards that protect the scenic and biological resources of the blufflands region.

A.2. Procedures: Develop working relationships with local elected officials, planning commissions, planning and zoning staffs, realty groups, citizen groups and others to determine local interests and needs. Establish intergovernmental task force to develop standardized regulations. Conduct national survey to find all regulatory tools that might work in this situation. Assist local officials in adoption and initial implementation of regulations.

A.3. Budget:
a. Amount budgeted: \$80,000
b. Balance: \$0

A.4. Timeline:	Ju91	Ja92	Ju92	Ja93	Ju93
Develop local relations	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx				
Task force develop rules		xxxxxxxxxxxxxx			
Conduct national survey	xxxxxxx				
Adopt/implement rules				xxxxxxxxxx	

A.5. Status: The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Blufflands Planner developed a network of local officials and staff, citizen groups, agencies and individuals who are concerned about blufflands protection in southeastern Minnesota. The Blufflands Planner provided guidance and resource information to local communities on options for protecting the region's unique resources. Specifically, assistance was given to Goodhue and Houston Counties for the development of county-wide blufflands zoning. Information on land use policies from blufflands communities and a nationwide survey was shared with Wabasha and Winona Counties and other interested communities and citizens. The Cities of Red Wing and Winona are updating their Comprehensive Plans and have requested technical assistance from the Blufflands Planner on incorporating resource protection provisions.

The positive response to the Blufflands Initiative reflects the emphasis on public awareness and meeting the needs of local communities and citizens. By providing technical information and encouragement, rather than state-mandated regulations, the Blufflands Initiative has generated commitment and pride in long-term blufflands stewardship among several local communities. The two-year LCMR project has enabled the DNR to strengthen communication and cooperation with local governments. The DNR recognizes the value of

continuing this outreach effort and is searching for funds to extend the Blufflands Initiative beyond July 1, 1993. The Initiative has been extended to July 30, and it is hoped funding can be secured to extend the program to June 1994.

A.6. Benefits: Enables local governments to impose land use controls that are consistent throughout the region and adequately protect the scenic and biological resources of the blufflands. Provides development standards that can be used throughout the region and may have applicability elsewhere.

B. **Provide detailed biological inventory to local governments**

B.1. Narrative: Utilize and expand upon County Biological Surveys to provide to local governments detailed information on bluffland areas of an ecologically sensitive nature, areas of critical habitat for endangered, threatened and special concern species, unique plant communities, and areas threatened by urban encroachment.

B.2. Procedures: Identify and map areas of increasing urban development. Work closely with DNR Nongame Wildlife staff and County Biological Surveys to identify areas of special biological significance. Develop maps of biologically significant areas. Coordinate with LCMR Land Use Update prepared by the International Coalition for Land and Water Stewardship in the Red River Basin.

B.3. Budget:
a. Amount budgeted: \$30,000
b. Balance: \$0

B.4. <u>Timeline:</u>	<u>Ju91</u>	<u>Ja92</u>	<u>Ju92</u>	<u>Ja93</u>	<u>Ju93</u>
Map development	xxxxxxxxxxxx				
Identify biologically significant areas	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx				
Map biologically significant areas				xxxxxxx	

B.5. Status: A cooperative agreement between the Blufflands Initiative and the DNR Division of Parks and Recreation accelerated the Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS) in Houston County and in state parks. Blufflands counties are a high priority for the MCBS because of the high diversity of rare species found in this landscape and because the Blufflands Planner has been available to assist with public outreach. The Blufflands Planner has responded to citizen requests for MCBS data for their land and community and has offered assistance with resource protection. With assistance from the Blufflands Planner, the City of Red Wing is incorporating the MCBS data into its land use plan.

The MCBS will continue to focus on blufflands counties. Local communities and citizens benefit from the opportunity to learn about this database and how they can help protect these unique resources. The Blufflands Planner could continue to fulfill this role if the DNR is able to find additional funds to continue the position.

B.6. Benefits: Provides local governments with the information necessary to identify and protect biologically significant resources. Complements county biological surveys and provides additional resource information.

C. **Provide public information about blufflands**

C.1. Narrative: Develop public education program about the scenic and biological values of the blufflands so that resource protection, tourism and land stewardship goals are met. Publish pamphlet enabling bluffland residents to become better stewards of the region's unique resources.

C.2. Procedures: Develop and conduct public education program. Publish pamphlet concerning bluffland resources. Utilize area environmental learning centers and public school environmental education programs, as well as other programs as the Science Museum of Minnesota.

C.3. Budget:
a. Amount budgeted: \$40,000
b. Balance: \$0

C.4. <u>Timeline:</u>	<u>Ju91</u>	<u>Ja92</u>	<u>Ju92</u>	<u>Ja93</u>	<u>Ju93</u>
Public education	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx				
Publish pamphlet:	xxxxxxx				

C.5. Status: As part of the public education program, the Blufflands Initiative developed a booklet, brochure and poster that highlight the significance and sensitivity of blufflands resources. The public response to these materials was overwhelmingly positive and more than 50 presentations have been made to a diversity of audiences. Many citizen groups have formed in the Mississippi River Valley in response to growing threats to the blufflands and have requested guidance and information from the Blufflands Planner. The Blufflands Planner has networked successfully with many of these groups to share information and to increase effectiveness across the landscape. The Blufflands Initiative helped plan and co-sponsor a multi-state workshop with Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota on land protection strategies. This workshop and other informational meetings facilitated by the Blufflands Planner have generated enthusiasm for finding solutions to blufflands issues that balance economic development with resource protection.

The Blufflands Initiative has heightened public awareness of blufflands protection issues and generated enthusiasm for long-term stewardship of the blufflands landscape. There is now an opportunity to go much further and build on rising community and citizen activism. Providing resource information, such as the MCBS data, to local communities helps them make better resource management decisions. Currently the best avenue for disseminating the information is through the Blufflands Planner.

- C.6. Benefits: Enables the public to better understand the biological and scenic values of the blufflands, protects and improves the region's tourism economy, promotes good land stewardship.

IV. Evaluation

This initiative can be evaluated by its ability to develop coordinated land use controls that protect the outstanding scenic and biological characteristics of the blufflands in the four Mississippi River counties, and by the adoption and successful implementation of those controls by all local governments. It can be evaluated by the increased public understanding of the biological diversity of the area and the need to protect the region's scenic and biological resources.

V. Context

- A. No comprehensive bluffland protection proposal has been implemented, despite 15 years of discussion. Only one local government currently provides protection for its bluffs. Currently, the County Biological Survey (Wildlife-7, Subd. 9(d)) is identifying bluffland areas of an ecologically sensitive nature, areas of critical habitat for endangered species, and unique plant communities. With accelerating urbanization, there is a clear need to provide future protection for the area's scenic and biological resources.
- B. This initiative will be supplemented by the County Biological Survey (Wildlife-7, Subd. 9(d)) work in the four-county region. It also provides the first opportunity to use the CBS-generated information for land-protection activities by local governments and for public education and land stewardship efforts.
- C. Not applicable.
- D. Not applicable.
- E. Biennial budget system program title and budget: Not available at this time.

VI. Qualifications

1. Program Manager

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Mississippi River System Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

B.A. Sociology, Winona State University
Former Associate Executive Director, Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area
Commission
Former Winona County Planning Director

VII. Reporting Requirements

Semiannual status reports will be submitted not later than January 1, 1992, July 1, 1992, January 1, 1993, and a final status report by June 30, 1993.