



NEWS RELEASE

Recent Acquisitions Add 143 Acres to Three Refuge Units

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Recent land purchases have expanded the Bloomington Ferry, Louisville Swamp and Rapids Lake Units of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The purchases have been completed by the Minnesota Valley Trust, Inc., a nonprofit corporation that works closely with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on expansion of the Refuge.

“The Trust and USFWS are pleased that landowners along and very near the Minnesota River want to see their property become part of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge,” explained Deborah Loon, executive director of the Minnesota Valley Trust. “This means we can protect critical habitat for wildlife and natural places for the public’s enjoyment forever.”

The purchases expand the Refuge by 24 acres in Bloomington, 98 acres in Scott County near Jordan and 21 acres in Carver County near the Carver, for a total of 143 acres. All lands will be donated to the USFWS for permanent protection and management as part of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

The Bloomington Ferry and Louisville Swamp Unit parcels were acquired by the Minnesota Valley Trust with assistance from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, as appropriated by the Minnesota Legislature and recommended by the Legislative-Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources.

The Rapids Lake Unit parcel was acquired with assistance from Minnesota’s Outdoor Heritage Fund, as appropriated by the Minnesota Legislature and recommended by the

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.

The oak savanna and prairie on the Rapids Lake Unit parcel will be restored and enhanced, then transferred to the USFWS. Once the habitat work is completed, the land will be opened to the public for hunting, as posted, as well as wildlife observation, interpretation, hiking and photography.

The parcels in the Bloomington Ferry and Louisville Swamp Units are already open to the public for hiking, wildlife observation, interpretation and photography. Hunting is not allowed on those units of the Refuge. The Minnesota State Trail goes through the parcel acquired in the Louisville Swamp Unit.

The Minnesota Valley Trust is working with additional landowners willing to sell their property in targeted areas in the Minnesota River Valley, as prioritized by the Refuge. The priority areas were identified through a habitat assessment conducted along the river by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. For more information, go to the Trust's website at www.mnvalleytrust.org.

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The Minnesota Valley Trust is a private, nonprofit corporation established in 2000 to expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District (WMD), conduct habitat restoration and enhancement work on the Refuge and WMD, and construct facilities to enhance the visitor experience on the Refuge and WMD.