
Name of Organization: The Conservation Fund

Type of Organization: Other

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The Conservancy Fund

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Project Title: Michigan Dunes Alliance

Project Category: Habitat (Ecological) Protection and Rest

Rank by Organization (if applicable): 0

Total Funding Requested (\$): 72,000 **Project Duration:** 2 Years

Abstract:

Ongoing land development and destruction from sand mining threatens Michigan's biologically diverse sand dunes and associated plant communities. The Conservation Fund is facilitating a partnership of five local land trusts, the Lake Michigan Federation, The Nature Conservancy and four government agencies together as the Michigan Dune Alliance. The goal of the Michigan Dune Alliance is to increase the individual organizations' capacity to conserve and steward key parcels as well as increase the public's understanding of this important resource. The Conservation Fund will serve as the fiscal agent for the group and no new non-profit organization will be formed.

The first step for the Michigan Dune Alliance is to know which sites are top ranked for biodiversity. The Michigan Natural Features Inventory has collected data on natural features, unique species and natural communities in the state since 1979. However, data for the Michigan sand dunes is lacking. The land trusts need science based site information packages and an understanding of dune ecology to be effective in working with landowners to conserve and steward their lands. The focus of this proposal is to fund the Michigan Natural Features Inventory to evaluate which rare species and natural communities (element occurrences-EO) are found on the dunes, digitize the information, and survey information gaps. Funding is being requested for two of the three years of the data collection as we are requesting the remaining funding from Michigan's Coastal Zone Management Program.

This is the first alliance of land trusts in the Great Lakes working on ecologically significant natural areas and thus will serve as a model for other areas. During the two-year period there will be six lively interactive training meetings for the Michigan Dune Alliance.

Geographic Areas Affected by the Project

States:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois | <input type="checkbox"/> New York |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indiana | <input type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michigan | <input type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota | <input type="checkbox"/> Ohio |

Lakes:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Superior | <input type="checkbox"/> Erie |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Huron | <input type="checkbox"/> Ontario |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michigan | <input type="checkbox"/> All Lakes |

Geographic Initiatives:

- | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greater Chicago | <input type="checkbox"/> NE Ohio | <input type="checkbox"/> NW Indiana | <input type="checkbox"/> SE Michigan | <input type="checkbox"/> Lake St. Clair |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|

Primary Affected Area of Concern: Not Applicable

Other Affected Areas of Concern: Lake Michigan Sand Dunes

For Habitat Projects Only:

Primary Affected Biodiversity Investment Area: Not Applicable

Other Affected Biodiversity Investment Areas:

Problem Statement:

Since 1979, the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) has collected data on the natural features, threatened and endangered species, and natural communities throughout the state of Michigan. Although the EPA and other agencies have funded data collection by the MNFI, the Michigan sand dunes and forests have not been a focus. There is good information on the coastal wetland systems. Additional data collection and verification is needed before good maps and information packages on priority sites can be produced for field use. In addition, the MNFI does not have the data to effectively prioritize and plan an ecoregional conservation approach to the Michigan sand dunes. In addition, the land trust personnel need more training on dune ecology to motivate landowners to take action. Training is needed on the sand dune ecology and stewardship with a focus on exotic weed control.

The land trusts and government agencies first met in November 1999 to discuss whether the idea of an alliance would bring increased capacity for land conservation and stewardship. The Conservation Fund discussed the alliance model focusing on information sharing by partners and developing local capacity to work on public and private land conservation and stewardship. At the end of the meeting the group decided to form the Michigan Dune Alliance and each developed work plans for their area. Based on the work plans, The Conservation Fund researched funding possibilities. In January 2000 the Michigan Dune Alliance met to discuss their work plans, determine the funding priorities and review the first proposal for funding the Alliance.

The Michigan sand dunes are under intense development pressure and this pressure will likely increase as the baby boom generation retires and inherit their parents' wealth. In the next 10 years, the baby boomers will inherit over \$7 trillion dollars from their parents. There are few places more beautiful to retire to than a home on Lake Michigan. The Michigan Dune Alliance needs to strategically conserve critical dune areas now as we will not be able to compete financially with the baby boomers.

Proposed Work Outcome:

The Michigan Natural Features Inventory will accomplish 2/3 of the work towards classifying the sand dunes and grant funds will be requested from Michigan's Coastal Zone Program for the other 1/3 of the funding.

- a. There will be an evaluation of all species and natural community records associated with the dunes to ensure their site quality ranks are appropriate. Old records will also be reviewed.

b. All 656 location records will be digitized.

c. Surveys will be completed to fill in the gaps of natural features information on the dunes system for animals, natural communities and plants.

The Michigan Dune Alliance will hold six meetings to share their land conservation and stewardship experiences and have experts in topics of interest. These are the topics:

a. Field based training focusing on the ecology of the dunes hosted by the MNFI.

b. The Nature Conservancy will host a group at Point Betsie to demonstrate stewardship techniques for exotic species.

c. Little Traverse Conservancy will discuss how to complete complex land transactions.

d. The Michigan DNR has a dune education program at PJ Hoffmaster State Park for children. The basics of how interpreters work with the public on sand dune issues will be covered in these sessions.

e. Each government agency involved with sand dune protection will present their program and the resources available to land trusts.

f. The Lake Michigan Federation is knowledgeable about the laws conserving sand dunes, the challenges from development and sand mining. Lake Michigan Federation will provide the history of sand dune protection, an overview of their educational programs and work with local land use planning initiatives.

A partnership agreement will be signed by each partner in which they agree to implement a work plan outlining what will be accomplished in their area and for the Alliance. Performance is key to a successful Alliance and the partnership agreement will clearly state the partner organizations's responsibility for work plans and that funding will be allocated based on their performance meeting their work plans.

Project Milestones:	Dates:
Contract with the MNFI	06/2000
Complete the partnership agreement	09/2000
Hold 6 education meetings	06/2000
Complete EO list, Old EO and digitizing	06/2001
Survey gaps for 2/3 of coast	06/2002
Provide sand dune ecology training	09/2000
Provide first cut of information	07/2000
Project End	06/2002

Project Addresses Environmental Justice

If So, Description of How:

Project Addresses Education/Outreach

If So, Description of How:

The first two years will focus on building the capacity of the land trust to work with landowners. The focus of the educational meetings is outlined above.

Project Budget:

	Federal Share Requested (\$)	Applicant's Share (\$)
Personnel:	30,000	30,000
Fringe:	10,000	0
Travel:	13,600	0
Equipment:	0	0
Supplies:	5,400	6,000
Contracts:	0	0
Construction:	0	0
Other:	0	0
Total Direct Costs:	59,000	36,000
Indirect Costs:	13,000	0
Total:	72,000	36,000
Projected Income:	0	0

Funding by Other Organizations (Names, Amounts, Description of Commitments):

Preproposals submitted

Michigan Great Lakes Protection Fund 1/20/00 Formation of the Alliance \$150,000

Proposals that will be submitted

Frey, Wege and Mott Fndts.		Capacity building	
Coastal Zone Management	4/1/00	MNFI 1/3 and educational materials	\$50,000
Michigan Nongame Wildlife	9/1/00	Dune stewardship	
Michigan Trust Fund		Land acquisition	

The local land trusts and The Nature Conservancy have each committed to raising matching funds for the Michigan Dune Alliance's total program including this proposal. The total program includes hiring staff, travel, equipment purchase and educational materials. While these numbers are not relevant to the proposal, they give an indication of the organizations' commitment to the Alliance.

Yearly match	1	2	3
Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Leelanau Conservancy	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Land Conservancy of W. M	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Little Traverse Conservancy	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
Southwest MI Lanc Conservancy	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000
The Nature Conservancy	\$ 10,000		
Total			\$ 241,000

Description of Collaboration/Community Based Support:

The Michigan Dune Alliance is formed with the following partners that have strong community connections as well as state agencies and national organizations. The following are the partners in the Michigan Dune Alliance.

- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
- Lake Michigan Federation
- Land Conservancy of West Michigan
- Leelanau Conservancy
- Little Traverse Conservancy

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Michigan Natural Features Inventory
National Park Service-RTCA
Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy
US Forest Service