

**Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
FY 2011 Recommendation
Accomplishment Plan**

Date: 18 December 2009

Project or Program Title: Little Nokasippi River Wildlife Management Area

Manager's Name: Mr. Dan Steward

Title: Board Conservationist

Agency/organization: MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)

Mailing Address: 1601 MN Drive, Brainerd, MN 56401

Telephone: (218) 828-2598

Fax: (218) 828-6036

E-Mail: Dan.Steward@state.mn.us

Web Site: www.bwsr.state.mn.us

Funds Recommended (\$000s)	Council Recommendation Funding	Out-Year Projections of Needs		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Outdoor Heritage Fund	\$843,000	0	0	0

Appropriation Language

Abstract

This proposal will not only expand an existing WMA by 252 acres for public outdoor recreation (e.g. hunting, fishing, etc.) but it will also protect the viability of the WMA into perpetuity through 634 acres of permanent conservation easements. This proposal focuses on the Little Nokasippi River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) which was established in 2006 complements to the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program and the support from Crow Wing County and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The WMA is situated within a very critical area of the Camp Ripley ACUB. Similar to military installations, WMAs across the state are impacted negatively by the pressures of development on their boundaries resulting in alterations to their intended land use. WMAs such as the newly established Little Nokasippi River WMA were established for the benefit of public recreation and when restrictions are imposed due to conflicting land use the public use is degraded. This project will ensure compatible land use into perpetuity. Two noteworthy public resources that impacted by the pressures of development include the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge and the Carlos Avery WMA.

Narrative

What is the problem to be addressed? How will this directly relate to restoring, protecting, or enhancing habitat? Why will this strategy work? Describe the nature and extent of any partnerships in this project, stakeholder and public participation processes associated with the project and any anticipated support or opposition to the project. For land acquisitions, indicate local government support and approval

The effects of population encroachment have been felt by military installations across the country. The most common solution has been restrictions placed on units training, which degrades training realism. Since encroachment has not yet become a serious issue on the periphery of Camp Ripley, Soldiers have not been limited in the field in terms of meeting their training objectives. In other words...Soldiers are able to train as they will be expected to fight on the battlefield. However, this could change quickly particularly in the vicinity of the Little Nokasippi river WMA which is located within a noteworthy growth corridor. According to the Minnesota State Demographic Center the population within the corridor is projected to grow 27% growth rate within the next 30 years. Acquiring the interest in lands around Camp Ripley including the Little Nokasippi River WMA will curb growth within this corridor and thereby ensure unrestricted training for Soldiers far into the future. It's the unrestricted, quality training, and facilities at Camp Ripley that ensures Soldier readiness.

The project will be implemented in accordance with formal Cooperative Agreements between the DNR, BWSR and National Guard Bureau (NGB). The agreements formalize the methodology and strategy for implementing the ACUB program for which the Little Nokasippi River WMA and this L-SOHC proposal is a part of. All land parcels acquired under the agreement must be located within the three-mile buffer area surround Camp Ripley. Furthermore, the parcels will be pursued in accordance with the prioritization process presented in the Camp Ripley ACUB proposal including, but not limited to, proximity to Camp Ripley, size of parcel(s), potential for development, land owner willingness, availability, and cost.

To ensure objectivity in parcel selection, a comprehensive database has been created to evaluate all land parcels lying within the 110,000 acre ACUB area which includes the Little Nokasippi River WMA. The data base is linked to criteria that are used to rank or score all candidate land parcels.

The initial decision to create the Little Nokasippi River WMA required the support of the Crow Wing County Board by resolution. This was accomplished unanimously and based on recent conversations with county board members; the expansion will be approved without hesitation. In fact, the board is prepared to include 170 acres of county tax forfeited land into the boundaries of the expanded WMA in conjunction with the success of this L-SOHC proposal.

Relationship to *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan* and other published resource management plans.

Reference resource management plans and their priorities that support this project.

The landscape within which the project is located is designated as one of the highest biodiversity landscapes in the state. This designation resulted from an eco-regional planning process through The Nature Conservancy which defined the landscape as the most functional/intact landscape within the Prairie Forest Eco-region. Also unique to the project area is its position within a larger habitat complex that encompasses the Mississippi River Corridor including the Mississippi Flyway and the rugged Eastern Bluff shoreline. What's more the WMA includes the confluence of the Little Nokasippi River and the Nokasippi River which occupies 4,498 feet and 13,161 feet of river shoreline, respectively. The confluence of the Nokasippi River with the Mississippi River is located about 1,000

feet west of the WMA. The habitat value of the project is reflected in the science-based planning process that included the entire area as an Important Birding Area (IBA) in according to the Audubon Society. The Little Nokasippi River WMA expansion ranks among all WMA projects for the MNDNR.

This proposal is also supported by the following planning initiatives:

- **FY 2008-2009 DNR ACUB Acquisition Plan** - The fee acquisition of property within the three-mile ACUB boundary also called out in the FY 2008-2009 DNR ACUB Acquisition Plan throughout the document.
- **MN DNR, “Tomorrow’s Habitat for the Wild and Rare: An Action Plan for Minnesota Wildlife”, 2006** – Camp Ripley has been identified as an area important for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (page 172). In addition, this proposal is supported by the identification of habitat loss and habitat degradation in Minnesota as the problem most identified in the ecological subsections where the ACUB exists, which are the Hardwood Hills, Mille Lacs Uplands, Anoka Sand Plains, Pine Moraines & Outwash Plains. Statewide, the Species in Greatest Conservation Need are impacted greatly by the loss of habitat (76%) and degradation of habitat in Minnesota (83%) (page 38). Of all 25 Ecological Classification System ‘Subsections’ in the state, the four that touch Camp Ripley and the buffer have significant numbers of species in greatest conservation need. They rank #3, #6, #9, and #11 (page 31). The protection and restoration of habitat in the ACUB will protect and manage existing habitat and help restore other important habitats.

Project Design and Evaluation

Describe the scope of the project in appropriate measures (i.e. ,acreage numbers of lakes, miles of shoreline)

Project Scope	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife (Include Description in Footnote)
Restore				
Protect	170 acres (20%)	235 acres (30%)	481 acres (50%)	Total 634 acres of conservation easements buffering WMA and 252 acre addition to WMA.
Enhance				

Note: The project will protect the aquatic system of the WMA which includes the 4,498 feet of the Little Nokasippi River and 13,161 feet of the Nokasippi River.

Counties in which activities will take place	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore				
Protect	Crow Wing 170 acres	Crow Wing 235 acres	Crow Wing 441 acres Morrison 40 acres	634 acres of buffer through conservation easements and 252 acre addition to WMA
Enhance				

Acres Within Each Ecological Section	Metropolitan-Urbanizing Area	Forest-Prairie Transition	Southeast Forest	Prairie Region	Northern Forest
Restore					
Protect		886 acres			
Enhance					

Funding Per Ecological Section	Metropolitan-Urbanizing Area	Forest-Prairie Transition	Southeast Forest	Prairie Region	Northern Forest
Restore					
Protect		\$843,000			
Enhance					

Indicate what is being funded

Funding Resource Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore				
Protect	\$162,000	\$225,000	\$456,000	The conservation easement element and acquisition expansion of the WMA will be a shared in terms of funding sources from L-SOHC, federal ACUB, and state in kind.
Enhance				

Acquisition and Tax Data	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability	43 acres	45 acres	164 acres	Total 252 acre addition to the WMA
Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability				
Permanent Easement	127 acres	190 acres	317 acres	Total 634 acres of conservation easements buffering WMA

Budget

Please describe how you intend to spend the recommended funds

Budget Item	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
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Personnel			
Contracts			
Equipment/Tools			
Materials/Supplies			
Fee Acquisition	\$225,000		
Easement Acquisition	\$618,000		
Easement Stewardship			
Travel			
Additional Budget Items			
TOTAL	\$843,000		

Relationship to Current Budget

Federal funding is currently available and has been available to support the Camp Ripley ACUB program since 2004. The funding is provided by the Department of Defense through National Guard Bureau (NGB) and is allocated to the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for executing the ACUB program. Approximately \$13 million has been provided to date not including the FY 2010 allocation which is intended to match this L-SOHC proposal.

Personnel

List the positions, name (if known) and anticipated program funds to be paid by this recommendation

Position	Name	Amount
Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Note: The proposal will not require the use of Outdoor Heritage funds for personnel since National Guard Bureau does include a portion of its funding for administration of the ACUB program. These funds are made available to DNR and BWSR for implementing ACUB related duties and responsibilities including the Little Nokasippi River WMA proposal. Field staff from Morrison and Crow Wing County Soil and Water Conservation Districts is responsible for implementing the conservation easement element of the proposal on behalf of BWSR. DNR field staff is responsible for the fee title acquisition element of the WMA expansion. Office personnel from DNR, BWSR, and MNARNG are responsible for program administration.

Leverage

List the sources and amounts of leverage you have in hand or anticipate by fiscal year.

SOURCE	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13

	In hand	Anticipated	In hand	Anticipated	In hand	Anticipated
State						
Non state (Federal)						
Fee Acquisition	\$539,000	\$136,000				
Easements		\$825,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000
In-kind/Volunteer						
MN National Guard		\$100,000		\$100,000		\$100,000
MNDNR		\$75,000		\$75,000		\$75,000
MNBWSR		\$75,000		\$75,000		\$75,000
Landowners		\$160,000		\$600,000 (500 acres)		\$600,000 (500 acres)
TOTAL	\$539,000	\$1,371,000		\$1,850,000		\$1,850,000

Indicate how the leverage will be used

Leverage	State				Non-State			
	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore								
Protect	Easement and acquisition	Easement and acquisition	Easement and acquisition	Easement and acquisition	Easement and acquisition	Easement and acquisition	Easement and acquisition	Easement and acquisition
Enhance								

Accomplishment Timeline

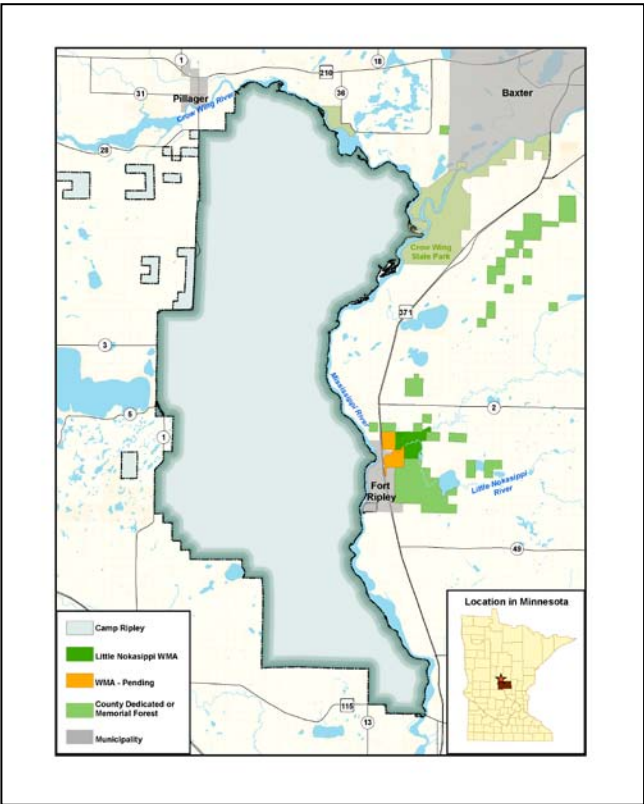
<i>Milestones</i>	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	Budgetary Expenditure
Secure resolution of approval for WMA expansion from Crow Wing County	February 2010			N/A In-kind State
Conduct appraisals of fee acquisition lands	July 2010			N/A Federal-ACUB
Negotiate fee acquisition	September 2010			N/A In-kind State
Acquire land 252 acres for WMA	October 2010			\$225,000 L-SOHC
Acquire Conservation easements for 634 acres	July 2010- June 2011			\$618,000 L-SOHC

Maintenance and Sustainability

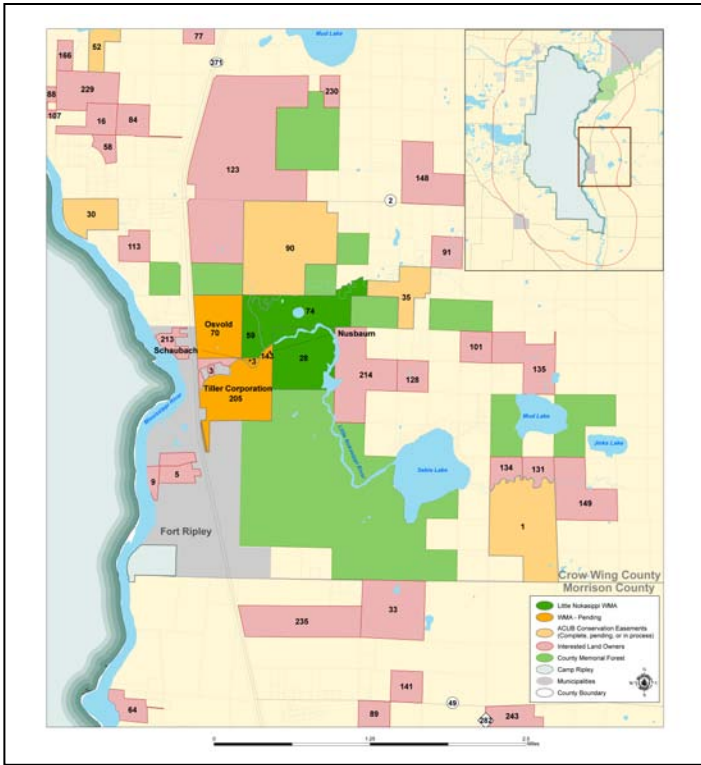
Please describe how lasting improvement will be maintained/ sustained. For easement acquisitions and fee acquisitions, explain how maintenance and sustaining costs will be paid.

The Little Nokasippi River WMA is established and operated in accordance with MN Statute 97A.133 and therefore will be open to public recreational use such as hunting, fishing, and hiking. The project will also protect the long-term viability of the WMA by enrolling 634 acres of land into permanent conservation easements on surrounding lands. The MNDNR will be responsible for maintaining the WMA whereas MNBWSR will be responsible to monitoring the permanent conservation easements.

Camp Ripley Perspective



Little Nokasippi River WMA



L-SOHC Sections

