

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

Date: January 19, 2010

Project or Program Title: Prairie Heritage Fund

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	Council Recommendation Funding	Out-Year Projections of Needs		
		FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Funds Recommended (\$000s)	FY 2011			
Outdoor Heritage Fund	3,015,000	0	0	0

Appropriation Language

Abstract

Pheasants Forever and partners including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will protect 900 acres of priority prairie grassland, wetland habitat, and native remnant prairie (if available) as state wildlife management areas (WMA). In addition, acquired lands will be restored and/or enhanced to prairie and/or wetland habitat. Once complete, these WMAs will provide quality grassland/wetland habitat complexes that will benefit a myriad of game and non-game species and will provide public recreational opportunities for the citizens of Minnesota.

Narrative

The threats to wildlife habitat in the farmland regions of Minnesota are constant and increasing. Development pressures from urbanization, industry (e.g. wind, gravel), and agriculture put our existing habitats in constant jeopardy. Minnesota is also losing significant acreage of grassland habitat (approximately 70,000 acres last year) in the farmland region of Minnesota due to expiring CRP contracts. Now it is even more urgent to provide the vital permanent, high quality habitat complexes on a landscape level to protect and maintain wildlife populations. In addition, providing a place for Minnesotans to hunt, trap, fish and otherwise recreate in the outdoors are urgent needs, and needs we can deliver right now.

To help slow and reverse the loss of habitat and declining wildlife populations, Pheasants Forever and our partners will protect (fee acquisition from willing sellers) 900 acres of high priority grassland, wetland habitat, and native remnant prairie (if available) as state wildlife management areas (WMA). Striving to build landscape level habitat complexes that will protect and sustain wildlife populations, 17 of the 20 potential projects are additions to existing WMA's and all projects have been developed in consultation with the local DNR managers. DNR Commissioner approval will be received for any project funded under this proposal.

All acquired lands will be restored and/or enhanced. Acquired croplands will be restored to diverse grasslands and wetlands to the fullest extent. Enhancement to existing prairie grasslands and wetlands will also occur as determined by the DNR Manager and PF Biologists. Enhancements could include undesirable woody vegetation removal, water control structure installation, inter-seeding within grasslands to increase diversity and structure, managed grazing, invasive species control, or any other activity that improves the diversity and health of the prairie-wetland habitat complex. We will use as diverse of a seed mixture as reasonable for the site to achieve diversity and quality functional habitat using plants native to Minnesota.

Pheasants Forever's network of 76 Minnesota chapters and 24,000 members have been actively involved in protecting and restoring lands in partnership with the Minnesota DNR for 27 years. Wildlife Management Areas have proven to be an invaluable tool in protecting and sustaining habitat and the myriad of species that call them home. WMA's provide many recreational opportunities and are enjoyed by thousands of Minnesotans every year.

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

This effort directly protects, restores or enhances prairie grasslands, wetlands and habitat for game and wildlife. In cooperation with DNR Managers, we use existing data (e.g. County Biological Survey, HAPET Thunderstorm maps, Restorable wetlands inventory, and protected lands GIS layers), to identify, prioritize, and permanently protect prairie grassland and wetland habitats that improve habitat function for wildlife.

The work of this proposal is consistent with many of the strategies and objectives of existing plans including the *Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan*, the *Long-range plan for the ring-necked pheasant in Minnesota*, *Long-range Duck Recovery Plan*, *North American Waterfowl Management Plan*, *Partners in Flight Physiographic Area Plan for the Tallgrass Prairie*.

Project Design and Evaluation

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		900 acres		
Enhance				

Prairie systems include wetlands and vice versa. Wetlands and wetland systems are a key consideration for prioritizing projects and will be acquired and restored to their fullest extent.

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		Benton, Big Stone, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Dakota, Goodhue, LaQui Parle, McLeod, Meeker, Morrison, Mower, Pipestone, Rock, Swift, Todd		
Enhance*				

*Parcels acquired will be those that are restored and enhanced. At this time, we do not know which projects will come to completion.

Acres Within Each Ecological Section	Metropolitan-Urbanizing Area	Forest-Prairie Transition	Southeast Forest	Prairie Region	Northern Forest
Restore					
Protect	150 acres	150 acres		600 acres	
Enhance					

Potential projects are identified in the Metropolitan-Urbanizing Area, Southeast Forest, Prairie, Forest-Prairie Transition and Northern Forest Region. While a majority of the projects will occur within the prairie region, it is largely dependent on which projects actually are completed as to where the acres and dollars are expended.

Funding Per Ecological Section	Metropolitan-Urbanizing Area	Forest-Prairie Transition	Southeast Forest	Prairie Region	Northern Forest
Restore					
Protect	502,500	502,500		2,010,000	
Enhance					

Funding Resource Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore				
Protect		2,595,000		
Enhance				

Acquisition and Tax Data	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability	<i>150 acres</i>	<i>750 acres</i>		
Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability				
Permanent Easement				

Budget

Budget Item	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
Personnel	<i>35,000</i>	<i>10,000</i>	
Contracts	<i>375,000</i>		
Equipment/Tools			
Materials/Supplies			
Fee Acquisition	<i>2,000,000</i>	<i>595,000</i>	
Easement Acquisition			
Easement Stewardship			
Travel			
Additional Budget Items			
TOTAL	<i>2,410,000</i>	<i>605,000</i>	

Relationship to Current Budget

In recent years, PF has acquired approximately 2,000 acres of land that has been donated to a public agency. This grant significantly accelerates our ability to acquire priority parcels. We have assigned portions of positions to this project and directly deliver the outcomes outlined in this proposal. In addition, PF has added capacity to assist in the delivery of these types of projects. A new Director of Conservation Programs position was hired in December of 2009 to bring more capacity to deliver the Pheasants Forever habitat mission here in Minnesota. Only documented, direct to project costs will be reimbursed under this grant. Any dollars allocated under personnel that are unused will be moved to acquisition or restoration projects to accomplish more.

Personnel

Position	Name	Amount
Director of Conservation Programs/Sr. Field Coordinator	Joe Pavelko/Matt Holland	20,000

Regional Biologist	Eran Sandquist/Scott Roemhildt	15,000
Grant Department Staff	National Office Grant Department	10,000

Leverage

SOURCE	FY 11		FY 12		FY 13	
	In hand	Anticipated	In hand	Anticipated	In hand	Anticipated
State						
Non state		500,000		25,000		
In-kind/Volunteer						
TOTAL		500,000		25,000		

Leverage will come from PF Chapters, local partners, documented land value donations, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and other non-state sources.

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						525,000		
Enhance								

Accomplishment Timeline

Milestones	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	Budgetary Expenditure
Identify priority acquisitions.	7/1/2010			
Contract appraisals ordered.	7/11/2010			30,000
Purchase agreements.	12/01/2010			
Restoration actions initiated	10/01/2010			
Close on optioned tracts	Starting 11/1/2010			2,610,000
Donate Lands to DNR	6/30/2010			
Habitat restorations Completed		6/30/2011		375,000

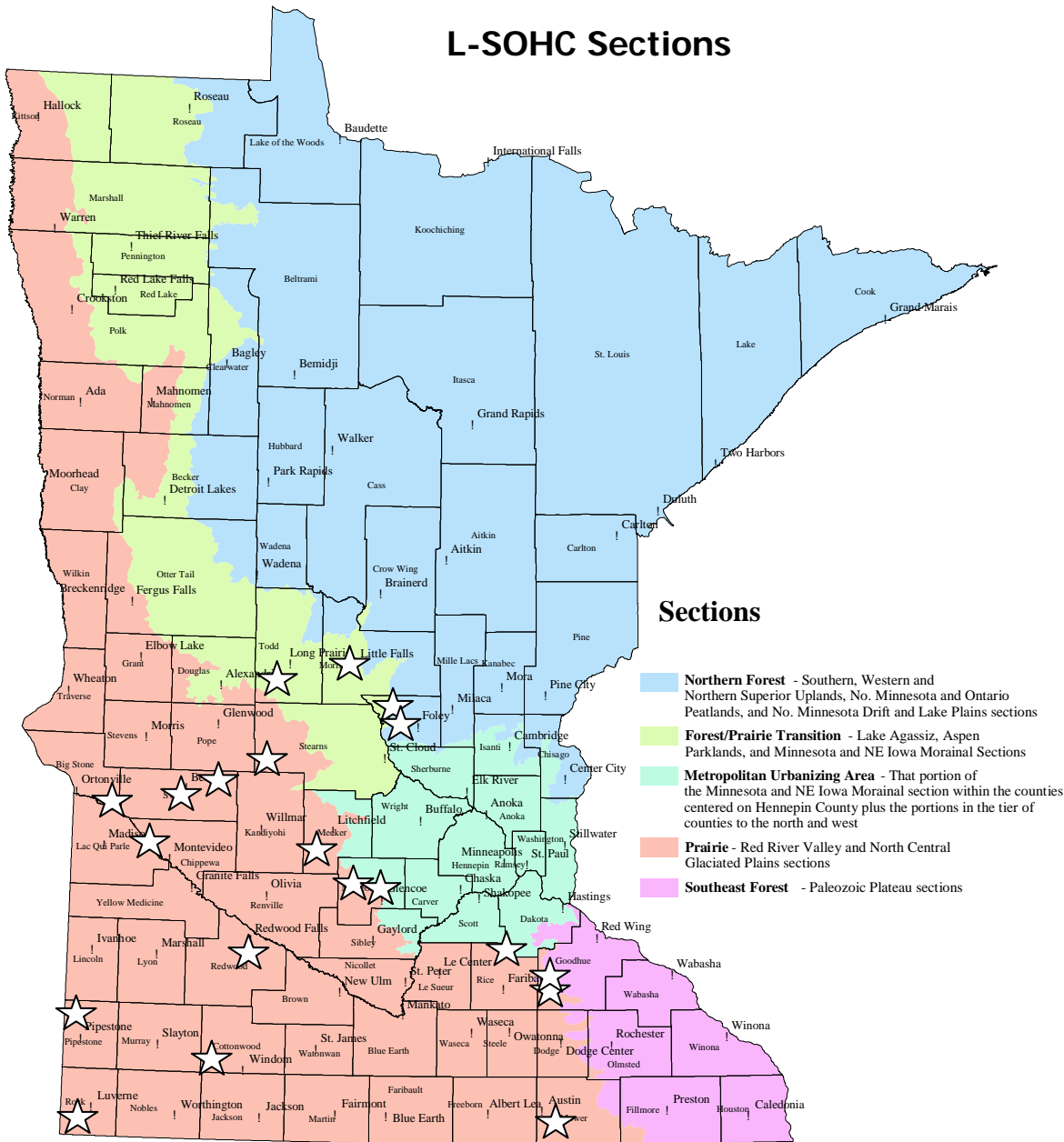
Maintenance and Sustainability

All lands will be enrolled into the state Wildlife Management Area system and will be managed in perpetuity by the Minnesota DNR. In addition, our local Pheasants Forever chapter members and volunteers maintain a high interest in seeing the habitat and productivity of acquired parcels at high-quality levels.

Potential Project List – FY2011 Prairie Heritage Fund

Potential Project Name	County	Acres	Zone
Lac Qui Parle WMA Addition	Big Stone	17	P
Benderberg WMA Addition	Chippewa	72	P
	Lac Qui		
Florida Creek WMA Addition	Parle	149	P
Darling WMA	Morrison	155	T
Camp Kerk WMA Addition	Swift	50	P
TBA WMA (Platt Lake)	Todd	162	T
Wieker WMA Addition	Meeker	17	P
Graham WMA Addition	Benton	40	F
Winter WMA Addition	Pipestone	160	P
Talcot Lake WMA Addition	Cottonwood	115	P
Clair Rollings West WMA Addition	Swift	197	P
Mill Pond WMA Addition	Mower	120	P
NEW WMA (Voosen)	Redwood	640	P
NEW WMA (Kujawa)	Benton	200	
Ras-Lyn WMA Addition	McLeod	88	P
Warsaw WMA Tract 2	Goodhue	188	SE
Warsaw WMA Tract 3	Goodhue	146	SE
Phasianus WMA Addition	McLeod	80	P
Chub Lake WMA Addition	Dakota	155	M
Rock River WMA Addition	Rock	<u>91</u>	P
		2842	

L-SOHC Sections



Sections

- **Northern Forest** - Southern, Western and Northern Superior Uplands, No. Minnesota and Ontario Peatlands, and No. Minnesota Drift and Lake Plains sections
- **Forest/Prairie Transition** - Lake Agassiz, Aspen Parklands, and Minnesota and NE Iowa Morainal Sections
- **Metropolitan Urbanizing Area** - That portion of the Minnesota and NE Iowa Morainal section within the counties centered on Hennepin County plus the portions in the tier of counties to the north and west
- **Prairie** - Red River Valley and North Central Glaciated Plains sections
- **Southeast Forest** - Paleozoic Plateau sections