

**Request for Funding Form
Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Fiscal Year 2011**

Program or Project Title: Little Nokasippi River Wildlife Management Area

Date: 30 October 2009

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	Council Funding Request	Out-Year Projections of Needs <i>For programs that may want to request OHF funds in future recommendation rounds, complete the columns below. One time requests enter zeros in all 3 fiscal years</i>		
Funds Requested (\$000s)	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Outdoor Heritage Fund	\$1,225	0	0	0

A. Summary

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 1253 acres of permanent conservation easements. This proposal focuses on the Little Nokassippi River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) which was established in 2006 complements to the 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 (see Figure No. 2). Similar to military installations, WMAs are impacted by the pressures of development on their boundaries..

The affects of population encroachment have been felt by military installations across the country. Each installation has had to find creative ways to deal with these issues. 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. Acquiring the interest in lands around Camp Ripley will ensure unrestricted training to its users far into the future. It's the unrestricted, quality training and facilities at Camp Ripley that ensures Soldier readiness.

In the interest of protecting the mission of Camp Ripley, the Minnesota National Guard adopted an Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program for Camp Ripley which was approved by National Guard Bureau (NGB) in 2004. Camp Ripley's ACUB was only the second in the Nation to be approved. The ACUB program has received tremendous endorsement and support from numerous local units of government, governmental agencies, local citizenry, and non-governmental organizations. This support resonates from the importance of Camp Ripley's mission and the benefits that the ACUB program provides in terms of protecting the rural character recreational opportunities throughout central Minnesota.

The purpose of the Camp Ripley ACUB program, known locally as "*Central Minnesota Prairie to Pines Partnership...preserving our heritage*", is to create and enhance a three mile natural buffer (110,000 acres) around Camp Ripley by taking advantage of available opportunities to prevent encroachment, enhance conservation and promote outdoor recreational opportunities such as the Little Nokasippi River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). By securing a buffer, Camp Ripley can continue to offer and provide critically important, high quality military training and operations to ensure combat readiness, as well as mitigate community development encroachment around the training site. Through implementation of Camp Ripley's proposal, Camp Ripley will also be contributing to preserving the local heritage and enhancing an extremely diverse regional conservation corridor within the Mississippi Headwaters Corridor.

Camp Ripley comprises 53,000 acres and is capable of accommodating a full complement of heavy and light field maneuvers and weapon systems that are fielded by the US Army. In addition to serving as a military training site for all branches of the Department of Defense, Camp Ripley is also Minnesota's largest state game refuge bordered by 19 miles of the Mississippi River to the east and 8 miles of the Crow Wing River to the north (See Figure No. 1).

B. Background Information

1. What is the problem or opportunity being addressed?

Funds will provide outdoor recreational opportunities for hunting, fishing and general recreation outdoor enthusiasts. In addition the project is integral to protecting the military mission of neighboring Camp Ripley through its Army Compatible Use Buffer program.

2. What action will be taken?

The action will result in acquiring approximately 252 acres of land from 4 landowners. The land will be acquired fee title and will be incorporated into the existing Little Nokasippi River WMA. The total estimated cost for the acquisition is \$900,000 of which \$225,000 will be

secured through the Outdoor Heritage Fund and the balance through National Guard Bureau (NGB). In addition the project will result in permanent conservation easements encompassing 1,253 acres. The easements are intended to protect the investment in the Little Nokasippi River WMA by creating a permanent buffer that will not be developed and subsequently resulting in land use that is incompatible with the WMA and the neighboring military mission. The total estimated cost for this element of the project is \$3,175,000 of which \$1 million will be secured through the Outdoor Heritage Fund and the balance through NGB (\$1,000,000), landowner contributions (\$925,000), Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources In-Kind (\$75,000), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources In-Kind (\$75,000), and the Minnesota National Guard In-Kind (\$100,000).

3. Who will take action and when?

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) will be responsible for implementing the program funds through the Outdoor Heritage Fund. In addition, the Minnesota National Guard (MNARNG) is responsible for securing matching funds through National Guard Bureau (NGB) similar to that which they have done successfully since 2004 in the total amount of \$12,981,500. The request for funds as it relates to this project has already been submitted to NGB and will be available in federal Fiscal Year 2010 (1 October 2009 through 30 September 2010). In turn, the funds are allocated through cooperative agreements between BWSR and DNR and NGB. Staffs from the Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) implement the program on behalf of BWSR. DNR staff will implement the program on their behalf. MNARNG staff also provides technical support and oversight of the program.

4. How will you coordinate this program with the other Constitutional Funding?

The total estimated cost for this outdoor Heritage Fund proposal is \$4,075,000 of which \$1,225,000 will be secured through the Outdoor Heritage Fund and the balance through NGB (\$1,675,000), landowner contributions (\$925,000), BWSR In-Kind (\$75,000), DNR In-Kind (\$75,000), and MNARNG In-Kind (\$100,000). The coordination of funds will be accomplished through existing cooperative agreements between NGB and BWSR and DNR. These agreements serve to track the expenditure of all funds relative to the Camp Ripley ACUB program.

5. What specific habitat changes will occur if this item is funded? Be specific about and list multiple benefits if they exist.

The ACUB program has proven to protect both riparian and non-riparian wildlife habitat landscapes. Action taken within the Little Nokasippi River WMA to date has included habitat restoration with the removal of structures/buildings associated with past land use. This pending Outdoor Heritage Fund proposal will not only further restoration efforts but also expand outdoor recreation opportunities including hunting, fishing, and hiking. The program will be a

success if 252 acres of property, offered by willing sellers, is purchased including both riparian and non riparian properties. The conservation easements will further protect the 609 acre investment in the WMA by limiting future development on the periphery forever.

6. Will your Outdoor Heritage Fund dollar request complete the planned accomplishments?

X YES

7. How will you pay for the maintenance of the accomplishments?

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will continue to assume responsibility for managing and maintaining the Little Nokasippi River Wildlife Management Area and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources is responsible for monitoring the conservation easements. The landowner is responsible for maintenance of the easement.

8. How does this action directly restore, enhance, or protect prairies, wetlands, forests or habitat for fish, game, and wildlife?

The project will directly protect and enhance habitat for fish, game and wildlife. In addition, the lands purchased through the fee title element of this proposal will be opened to public hunting, fishing and recreation through their designation as a Wildlife Management Area,

9. If you are restoring or enhancing property, is the activity on permanently protected land?

X YES The land to be acquired will be permanently protected and maintained by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as a Wildlife Management Area in accordance with Minnesota Statute 97A.133.

10. How will you ensure transparency and provide information about your work and use of Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars.

NGB requires a comprehensive annual report of all accomplishments within the Camp Ripley ACUB program. This report will also capture all accomplishments within the Outdoor Heritage Fund since the Outdoor Heritage Funds will serve as match to the federal funds. The annual report is public information that is transparent to all partners and the general public.

11. When do you expect to see these changes?

The annual reporting requirement has already been instituted including the relationship with the Outdoor Heritage Funds whether or not successful as was the case with the DNR's initial request in the first round of Outdoor Heritage Funding also on behalf of ACUB and the Little Nokasippi River WMA.

12. Why will this strategy work?

Since 2004, the Minnesota National Guard has invested about \$13 million in the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program for Camp Ripley and has leverage approximately \$45 million in other funds. This has been accomplished in partnership with BWSR, DNR, TNC, MNARNG, and Cass and Crow Wing Counties. BWSR and DNR are the primary partnering agencies since they have executed formal cooperative agreements with National Guard Bureau (NGB) to receive and expend funds on behalf of the Camp Ripley ACUB. This strategy has resulted in the initial development of the Little Nokasippi River WMA and has proven to be the most successful ACUB program in the nation complements to these partnerships.

13. Who might make decisions that assist or work against achieving the expected impact program?

Based on the tremendous support that the Crow Wing County Board, Fort Ripley Township, Minnesota National Guard, The Nature Conservancy, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources have offered in the development of the Little Nokasippi River WMA, the project will succeed unconditionally. The overwhelming success of the ACUB program throughout the area will complement the Outdoor Heritage Funding decision.

14. If this is acquisition of land, has the local government formally approved the acquisition?

X YES

Crow Wing Co. and Fort Ripley Township have officially approved (by resolution) the Little Nokasippi River WMA as it exists today and they are very supportive of the plans to expand the WMA and to protect the WMA with permanent conservation easements.

15. If this is fee simple acquisition of land, is the land free of any other permanent protection such as a conservation easement?

X YES

16. If this is an easement acquisition, will the eased land be open for public use? If so what kind of use?

The easements are intended to protect the investment in fee simple acquisition that has been made in developing and enhancing the Little Nokasippi River WMA where integrated public use will prevail on approximately 2,400 acres of public land including the Little Nokasippi River WMA (609 acres) and the Crow wing County Memorial Forest (1,785

acres). As such the conservation easements surrounding the public land will not be open to public use but the easements will protect the public investment and use of the WMA..

- 17. If easement acquisition, will the easement be a permanent conservation easements as described in MS 2009, Chapter 84C.01, specifically protecting the natural resource values of real property forever?**

 X YES

- 18. If you are proposing funding for a new or ongoing program how long into the future do you expect this program to operate?**

Although funding is being requested for one year, the results of this investment will ensure that this investment will last forever since the terms of acquisition and the conservation easements calls for “perpetuity”.

- 19. Which planning sections will you work in? Check all that apply in the list below.**

 X Northern Forest

 Forest/Prairie Transition

 Southeast Forest

 Prairie

 Metropolitan Urbanizing Area

- 20. Does the request address an urgent conservation opportunity that will be lost if not immediately funded?**

 X YES

 NO

If yes, please explain.

The availability of land and willingness of land owners to participate is a necessary reality to ensure immediate success. In addition, the majority of funding available as match to implement the project will be secured through the federal government as part the of the ACUB program. It is imperative that proponents capitalize on these opportunities. Furthermore, the project has essential momentum and support form local governmental officials attributable to the success of ACUB since 2004 including the establishment of the Little Nokasippi River WMA. Since the Highway 371 transportation corridor is a principal artery for growth (Brainerd/Baxter to St. Cloud) within the Mississippi River Corridor, it is imperative that the project be implemented before the available land is lost.

21. Does the request restore and/or enhance habitat on existing state-owned Wildlife or Aquatic Management Areas or Scientific and Natural Areas?

 X YES

 NO

If Yes, list the names of the WMAs and/or SNAs and the acres to be restored and/or enhanced.

The proposal will expand, restore, and enhance the Little Nokasippi River Wildlife Management Area.

22. Is this request based on assessment through a science based strategic planning and evaluation model similar to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Strategic Habitat Conservation model?

 X YES

 NO

If yes explain the model briefly.

The Little Nokasippi River WMA and the surround landscape that encompasses the Camp Ripley ACUB is part of an "Important Birding Area" that was approved in 2005. The IBA designation is a reflection of the extreme biological diversity that characterizes the project area.

23. Explain the scientific foundation for your project, and the benefits it will produce.

It is a well documented fact that military installations and wildlife management areas throughout the country are experiencing the adverse affects of encroachment through subdivision and development. Protection of land through acquisition or easements are proven techniques for protecting high quality habitats and their associated public use.

24. How do you set priorities? *(Be sure to list the criteria you use and the weight you give each one.)*

The Cooperative Agreements between the DNR, BWSR and NGB states that 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 Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) proposal including, but not limited to, proximity to Camp Ripley, size of parcel(s), potential for development, land owner willingness, availability, and cost.

The primary purpose of the Camp Ripley ACUB is to create and enhance a natural buffer around Camp Ripley to ensure that the military training mission of Camp Ripley is not impeded by the impacts of encroachment. Secondly, the ACUB will greatly benefit the natural resources of central Minnesota by minimizing the fragmentation of surrounding lands and subsequent loss of valuable habitat for sensitive species. Lastly, ACUB will contribute to preserving the local heritage by maintaining the rural character of the area that residents cherish.

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

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that are used to rank or score all candidate land parcels. In turn, each candidate land parcel must meet one or more of the following seven military funding criteria which cumulatively are weighted 75%.

1. Adjacent to Highway 371
2. Adjacent to the Camp Ripley Boundary
3. Greater than or equal to 80 acres in size
4. Borders a primary lake, river, or stream
5. Impacted by blast noise zone 2 or 3
6. Impacted by airfield noise
7. Located within airfield potential crash zone

Other land characteristic criteria are used to rank or score land parcels have a cumulative weighting of 25% including:

1. County biological survey findings
2. Cultural resources
3. Proximity to lakes, streams, and wetlands
4. Rare or endangered species
5. Vegetative cover/habitat
6. Proximity to public land

C. Relationship to the *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan* and Other Published Resource Management Plans

Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan – This proposal is supported by the following recommendations:

Habitat Recommendation 1: Protect Priority Land Habitats – This proposal is supported by the comprehensive mapping product (Figure H7, p. 44), showing the Camp Ripley area as scoring a medium high with regard to Integrated Terrestrial Value Score. This sets the area around Camp Ripley well ahead of many other areas of the state. The text in the plan states that, “The State must further strengthen its leadership to coordinate and stimulate efforts for the protection of these critical land areas among current and potential partners. This activity would include identification of relevant landowners, identification of the most cost-effective measures for protection, restoration, and education on the importance of the area...”. The ACUB program is designed to help the State achieve this goal.

Habitat Recommendation 2: Protect critical shorelands of streams and lakes

Habitat Recommendation 2A: Acquire high-priority shorelands

- This proposal is supported by the Integrated Aquatic Habitat Quality Index map (figure H8, page 45) showing the Crow Wing, Mississippi and the Gull River flowages, among others, as higher scoring aquatic habitats.

Habitat Recommendation 3: Improve connectivity and access to outdoor recreation

Habitat Recommendation 7: Keep water on the landscape – This proposal protects the functions of rainwater infiltration by preventing conversion to impervious surface.

The plan also identifies strong correlations between “protecting priority land habitats” and the following benefits: Water Quality / Quantity, Terrestrial Habitat Quality, Soil / Land Quality, Biodiversity, Aquatic Community Health, Economic Health, Recreational / Cultural / Spiritual / Aesthetic Value and Climate Change Mitigation / Adaptation (Final Plan p.28).

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.

The Nature Conservancy, “Prairie – Forest Border Ecoregion: A Conservation Plan”, 2001 - This proposal is supported by the identification of the Mississippi and Crow Wing River corridors as “Ecologically Significant Areas of the Prairie Forest Border” (map 7A). “Land development for residential or commercial uses, incompatible agricultural practices, exotic species and fire exclusion were identified as the primary threats facing conservation targets throughout the ecoregion” (page 2). The region is also considered an ‘active landscape’ in separate documents showing much of the ACUB buffer a focus of TNCs work.

D. Budget

Budget Item	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
Personnel			
Contracts			
Equipment/Tools/Supplies			
Fee Acquisition	\$225,000		
Easement Acquisition	\$1,000,000		
Easement Stewardship			
Professional Services			
Travel			
Additional Budget Items			
TOTAL	\$1,225,000		

E. Personnel Details *In the space below list the names, titles and anticipated program funds to be paid by this recommendation. If you will need to fill a position just list the title and amount.*

<u>Title</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Amount.</u>
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Note: No funds from the Outdoor Heritage Fund will be used for personnel including, but not limited to, personnel from BWSR, DNR, TNC, MNARNG, and SWCDs. Instead, the funds will be used for direct payment for land acquisition and conservation easements.

F. All Leverage In the table below list the sources and amounts of leverage you anticipate by fiscal year you anticipate receiving it. Include state and non-state leverage.

Source of Non-State Leverage	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
National Guard Bureau	\$1,675,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Landowners	\$925,000	\$925,000	\$925,000
Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000
Minnesota Department of Military Affairs	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
TOTAL	\$2,850,000	\$2,175,000*	\$2,175,000*

*Funding will be secured through National Guard Bureau in partnership with DNR, BWSR, and MNARNG in support of ACUB. This investment is predicated on continued funding from the Department of Defense which began in 2004.

G. Outcomes:

- 1) *In the first table below, quantify the outcomes you plan to achieve with the recommended funds.*
- 2) *In the second table show list the sections where outcomes will occur.*
- 3) *In the third table, allocate your recommended funds to each cell with outcomes listed in table 1.*
- 4) *In the fourth table show the leverage to be applied to each cell with outcomes listed in table 1. and*
- 5) *If you have any outcomes listed in the "protect" row in table 1, account for them according to the type of acquisition and PILT status in table 5*

Table 1 Accomplish- ments	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore				<i>252 acres</i>
Protect				<i>1043 acres</i>
Enhance				<i>210 acres</i>

Table 2 Sections Impacted and Impact Quantifier	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore				<i>17%</i>
Protect				<i>69%</i>
Enhance				<i>14%</i>

Table 3 Recommend Fund Allocation	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore				<i>252 acres</i>
Protect				<i>210 acres</i>
Enhance				<i>210 acres</i>

Table 4 Leverage \$	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore				<i>750,000</i>
Protect				<i>2,157,500</i>
Enhance				<i>37,500</i>

Table 5 Acquisition Data	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability				<i>State WMA 609 acres</i>
Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability				<i>N/A</i>
Permanent Easement				<i>N/A</i>

H. Accomplishment Time Table: Using the headings below, include a clear statement of how much of what is being accomplished and when. Attach a map showing where accomplishments are anticipated. Accomplishments should clearly restore, enhance or protect forests, wetlands, prairies and habitat for fish, game and wildlife.

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Measure</u>
1. Property appraisal for fee title acquisition	July 2010	4 property appraisals
2. Negotiate fee title purchase	Sept. 2010	4 properties
3. Acquire land as part of WMA	Oct. 2010	4 properties (252 acres)
4. Dedicate addition to WMA	Nov. 2010	252 acres
5. Secure landowner commitment for easements	July 2010	1253 acres
6. Execute easements	Oct. 2010	1253 acres
7. Record easements	Dec. 2010	1253 acres

I. Relationship to Your Current Budget

Since 2004, the Minnesota National Guard has invested about \$13 million in the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program for Camp Ripley and has leverage approximately \$45 million in other funds. Of this amount the initial establishment of the Little Nokasippi River WMA was accomplished in April 2006 in the amount of \$420,000 with the assistance of DNR and TNC. Subsequent investment in the WMA occurred in 2009 as the WMA was expanded at a cost of \$505,000 also with the assistance of DNR and TNC.

J. How Will the Habitat Improvements Be Sustained?

The fee title acquisition for the Little Nokasippi River WMA has been assigned to a management division within the Department of Natural Resources, e.g. Fisheries, Parks, Wildlife, Forestry. Costs and staffing for sustaining these properties are born by these management divisions.

BWSR has assumed responsibility for monitoring and maintaining the permanent conservation easements. This is accomplished in conjunction with the staff from the county Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

K. Attach a list of your projects listing their county location and edit the map of Minnesota on the next page to show each project as a symbol.

As shown in Figures that follow, the project (Little Nokasippi River WMA) is located Crow Wing County but the impact of the project will also be realized in Morrison County with the permanent conservation easements.

Figure No. 1

Camp Ripley Perspective

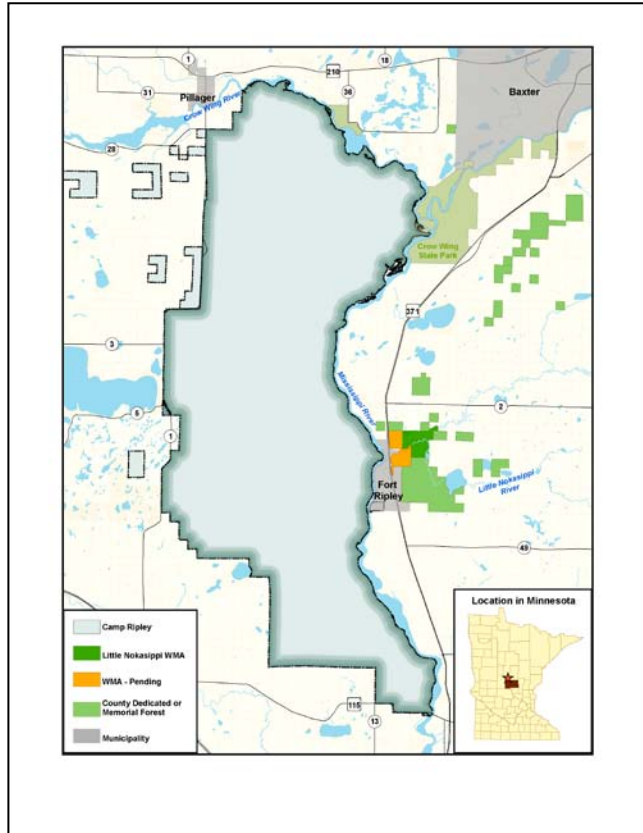


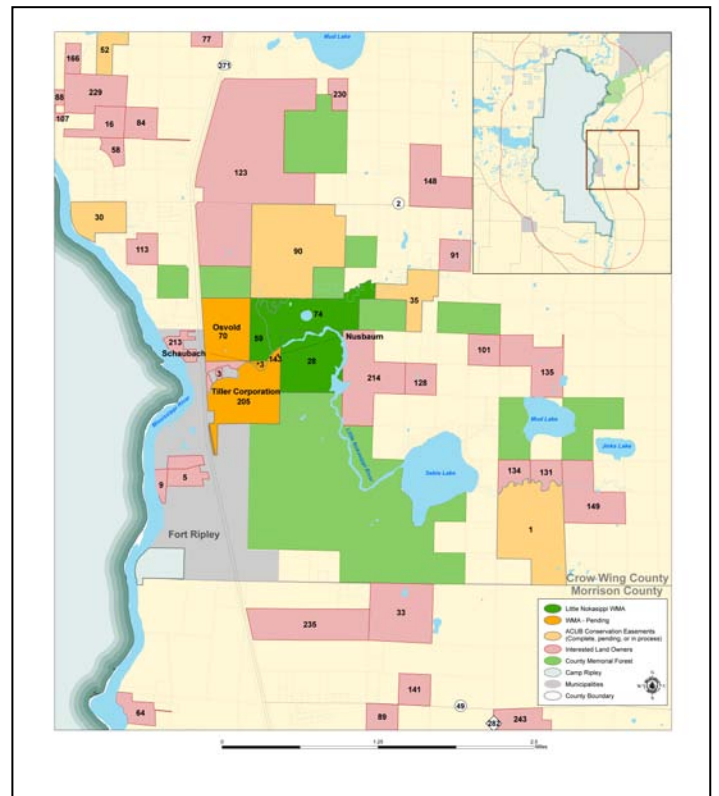
Figure No. 2

Little Nokasippi River WMA

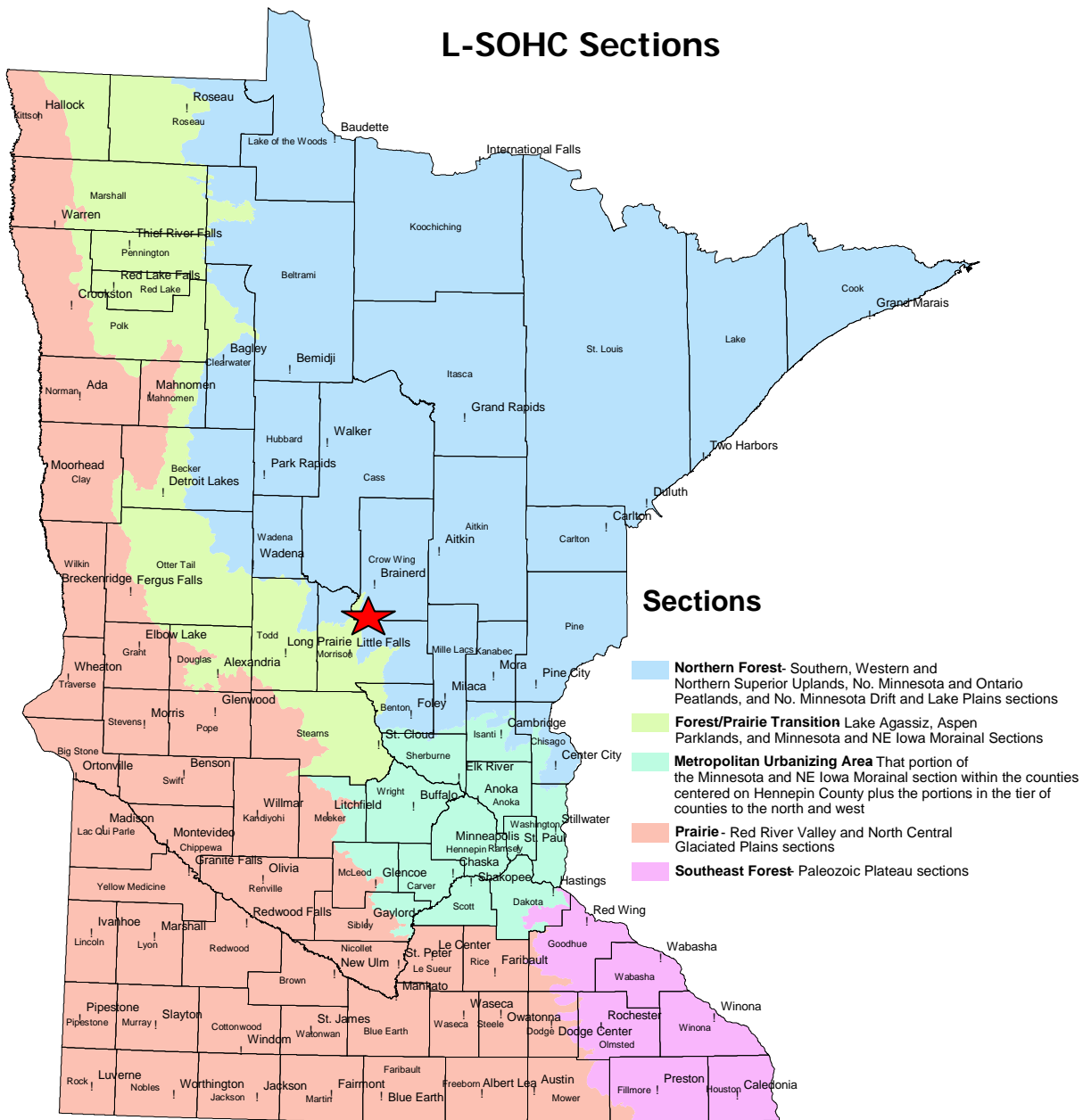
- Existing WMA 357
- WMA pending (LSOHC) 252
- Completed Easements 863
- Interest pending (LSOHC) 2,584
- County forest 1,785

TOTAL *5,841

***Acres within the greater Little Nokasippi River WMA area**



L-SOHC Sections



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