

Program Title: Red Wing Wildlife League (RWWL) Historic Rice Lake Restoration

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

You can find Word versions of this form at LOHC.state.mn.us/funding.html .

Program or Project Title: #13 Historic Rice Lake Restoration - Red Wing Wildlife League (RWWL)

Date: 2 November 2009

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	Council Funding Request	Out-Year Projections of Needs		
Funds Requested (\$000s)	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Outdoor Heritage Fund	\$1,220,000.00	180,000.00		0

A. Summary

This project will restore 30 acres of shallow open water wetland/historic Rice Lake within the floodplain of Mississippi River near its confluence with the Cannon River. This project also includes reforestation of 18 acres of lowland hardwood forest with high wildlife value trees adjacent to the restored wetland and Cannon/Mississippi Rivers.

B. Background Information

1. What is the problem or opportunity being addressed?

The Cannon River has contributed substantial sediment to the DNR Public Water 13W (Rice Lake). This was a result of a beaver dam constructed in the river in the 1950's that backed up water, resulting in the river banks to be breached and forcing the re-alignment of the river so as to start flowing into historic Rice Lake . The watershed area of the Cannon River is 1,462 square miles and includes six counties: Dakota, Goodhue,

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Le Sueur, Rice, Steel and Waseca. Agricultural practices in these counties contribute to accelerated sedimentation within Rice Lake. With the new source of sediment the lake was reduced to several smaller open bodies of water in 1968 and currently is completely filled with sediment and has converted to a wet meadow with a monotype of river bulrush. This proposed project involves restoration of 30 acres of historic Rice Lake. The *Environmental Pool Plans Document*, January 2004, developed by a Federal/State interagency work group identifies the Cannon River Delta (the RWWL Property) as an area to protect and maintain habitat conditions along with measures to improve aquatic connectivity and increase water depths.

2. What action will be taken?

Restore 30 acres of historic Rice Lake that was once part of a 134-acre historic shallow open water area at the site. Removal of sediment will take place to restore as near as possible the historic topography to the 30 acre area and increase topographic diversity. An area adjacent to the sediment removal area will be utilized to restore a high wildlife value lowland hardwood forest (with tree species such as bur oak, swamp white oak, hackberry, and similar), as well as create an appropriate level of separation between Rice Lake and the Cannon River via reestablishment of a natural river levee (to minimize the risk of future re-sedimentation within the restored Rice Lake).

3. Who will take action and when?

The Red Wing Wildlife League (RWWL) was formed in 1935 as an outdoor sportsmen's club and today boasts 800 members, at least 200 of which use the League's property for fishing and hunting. RWWL property is also open to the public for cross country skiing, snowshoeing, bird watching and natural resources education for youth. To complete this project, the RWWL will hire an independent ecological and engineering consultant to design the project and provide project support. The League will hire a contractor through a competitive process to complete excavation/earthwork. The project planning will begin after July 1, 2010 with construction proposed to begin in late summer/fall or potentially winter of 2011 during lower water conditions. The project will be completed by the end of 2012.

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

This project will provide an incremental benefit to water quality in the Mississippi River, identified in L-SOHC documents and the *Statewide Conservation & Preservation Plan* as a high priority for restoration and enhancement. This project will also improve available recreational resources for the region. We are unaware of other projects in the area that have been or will be proposed in the vicinity of this project. Should we become aware of other projects and learn their could be synergistic benefits, we are open to discussing and refining as necessary work plan steps to realize increased overall benefits to the resource.

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

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Restoration of historic Rice Lake shallow open water areas will improve/restore habitat for a wide variety of game and nongame species including song birds, sandhill cranes, reptiles, amphibians and other animals. Habitat will be improved for game species, especially nesting and migratory waterfowl, turkey, furbearers, and white-tail deer. This restoration will also increase habitat for a wide variety of fish species that utilize the Mississippi River and its backwater/ wetland areas for spawning and nursery areas for fry.

6. When do you expect to see these habitat changes?

The habitat improvement benefits will occur upon completion of the initial restoration effort. As vegetation (including lowland hardwood trees such as swamp white oak, bur oak, hackberry and others) develops, the habitat value to game and state-listed nongame species will continue to further improve.

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

☒ **YES** ☐ **NO**
If not, how will you finance completion?

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

The RWWL accomplishes ongoing habitat maintenance and improvement as part of its normal functions and budgets appropriately for this work. Likewise, RWWL has a regular source of revenue which enables this ongoing work.

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

This proposed project directly restores over 30 acres of previously degraded habitat through the removal of sediment that filled a historic shallow open water lake and the complementary establishment of a high wildlife value lowland hardwood forest community in an area currently dominated by the nonnative, invasive reed canary grass.

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

☒ **YES** ☐ **NO**
If yes briefly describe the kind of protection.

RWWL land is protected by permanent Conservation Easement held by the Minnesota Land Trust

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

RWWL hires an independent accountant to audit its financial affairs. Financial records are regularly reviewed by board members and available to groups such as L-SOHC for

project-related reviews. RWWL has secured State Wildlife Grant, Heritage Enhancement, and DNR Conservation Partners Grants in the past and successfully met criteria for accounting, insurance, and other parameters. As a result of this and other projects RWWL has been involved in, we are accustomed to providing regular reports/updates on work progress and cost/expense records to grantors.

12. Why will this strategy work?

This project is part of a comprehensive *RWWL Habitat Rehabilitation & Enhancement Plan* that involved input from a wide variety of agency stakeholders that regularly work with restoration projects on the Mississippi River (See Attached Plan). In particular, Jeff Janvrin, Mississippi River Habitat Specialist for the WI DNR provided key input on restoration techniques and estimated costs based on his previous work with multiple and similar projects along the Wisconsin side of the Mississippi River in this area. RWWL included a wide variety of stakeholders in these meetings and received broad support from all natural resource professionals involved. In particular, the design of the restoration work will minimize the risk of post-restoration degradation by keeping the restored lake off-line from the Cannon River.

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

The Minnesota DNR, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Goodhue County Soil and Water Conservation District, Audubon, Izaak Walton League, MN Land Trust, Cannon River Watershed Partnership, Goodhue County, City of Red Wing, MN Board of Water and Soil Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These agencies were valuable partners as part of a Technical Advisory Committee that provided input on this project and will provide further assistance to achieve the goals of the project.

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

_____ YES

 X NO

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

_____ YES

 X NO

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

_____ YES

 X NO

If Yes what kind of use?

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

_____ **YES**

_____ **NO**

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

_____ **Not Applicable** _____ **Years**

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

_____ Northern Forest

_____ Forest/Prairie Transition

_____ **X** **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.

Although RWWL has a source of income, the rate of incoming financial resources prevents implementation of the Historic Rice Lake restoration project in the absence of substantial outside funding. L-SOHC funds represent the only, or one of only a few, resources that would enable this project. RWWL has saved adequate funds to serve as a cash match for this project, but would not be able to take this project on without L-SOHC assistance.

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

_____ **YES**

_____ **X** **NO**

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

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.

This project is included in the report called the "Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Plan" that was funded by the Red Wing Wildlife League and finalized in 2005. The plan involved a significant amount of input from a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on projects that could be performed on the RWWL to rehabilitate and enhance habitat for a wide variety of species on the 2,700 acres of RWWL property. The TAC provided input on the approaches, discussed economical and environmentally sensitive options to achieve RWWL goals, and provided technical feedback on appropriate methods of habitat improvement. The personnel represented at the TAC meetings are shown in Table 1 below. Importantly, the Goals and Objectives of the Plan build on the framework provided in the *Environmental Pool Plans Document (EPP)*, January 2004, developed by an interagency work group.

Table 1. Agency personnel involved with TAC Meeting

Name	Representing	Name	Representing
Don McGuiness	Audubon	Dan Dieterman	MN DNR Fishery
Beau Kennedy	Goodhue SWCD	Jeff Janvrin	WI DNR, MS River Habitat Specialist
B. Kosec	Izaak Walton League	Dan Leopold	Izaak Walton League
Terry Helbig	MN DNR - Forestry	Bill Huber	MN DNR - Waters
Kevin Stouffer	MN DNR - Fisheries	Don Nelson	MN DNR - Wildlife
Mike Tenney	MN DNR - Wildlife	Clint Miller	MN Land Trust
Justin Watkins	Cannon River Watershed Ptnrshp		

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

The contiguous expanse of floodplain habitat along the Mississippi and Cannon rivers, the 2,700 acre RWWL property includes some of the largest privately owned floodplain and marshes in the state. The property also supports bald eagle nest sites, a heron rookery, two sandhill crane nesting sites, and the cerulean warbler – a bird of special concern in Minnesota. In addition, over 90% of the property is mapped by the MN DNR County Biological Survey as supporting significant natural communities and supporting numerous Species of Greatest Conservation Need, across multiple taxa, including bird and turtle species.

The DNR's 2006 document *Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy* identifies Lowland Deciduous Forests as a habitat type that once formed large areas of floodplain forest in southern Minnesota. These habitats have been fragmented and impacted by urbanization, conversion to agriculture, change in hydrologic regime due to damming, loss of canopy cover and mature trees and invasive spread of reed canary

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grass. This plan also identifies that these habitats are key for preservation of the prothonotary warbler, Cerulean warbler, Red-shouldered hawk and eastern massasaugas.

The *Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy* also recognizes shallow lakes for their importance as breeding areas for waterfowl such as lesser scaup, northern pintail, common moorhen and many others. These habitats are also important for non-game birds such as least bitterns, American bitterns, marsh wrens and Virginia rails which require emergent habitat as breeding habitat. Foster's terns also require large deep-water marshes that contain muskrat houses or floating mats of vegetation for nesting sites. Our project will be consistent with the plan by restoring and preventing degradation of shallow lakes (historic Rice Lake), restore larger complexes of wetland and shallow lake habitat used by Species in Greatest Conservation Need, manage invasive vegetation species and restore more natural water regimes.

Bottomlands along the Mississippi River also provide crucial habitat for the Blanding's turtle to complete its life cycle (Blanding's turtles are reported from the area, including the nearby Cannon River SNA). These wetland, floodplain forest, upland habitat, open water complexes also offer nesting sites for gopher, fox and hognose snakes, map turtles, tiger beetles, jumping spiders, herons, egrets, eagles and a variety of declining songbirds such as the wood thrush. Our project will restore and enhance important contiguous habitat types along the Mississippi River corridor.

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

Restoration priorities were developed during the *RWWL Habitat Restoration & Enhancement Plan* project. Implementation of the restoration projects from the HR&E Plan and ongoing management hinges on financial resources available to RWWL. Past efforts to implement other projects called out in the HR&E plan have involved smaller projects with costs ranging from approximately \$10,000 to \$100,000. Although the larger project proposed here has been a top priority for RWWL, the lack of an outside source of funding has prevented its implementation.

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

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The *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan* recommendations identifies restoration and protection of shallow lake, restoration of wetlands and restoration and protection of in-water habitat of lakes and streams as a priority under the strategic framework for integrated resource action.

In addition, the type and general location of restoration work proposed is consistent with the following documents:

- *Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy* (MN DNR 2006)
- *Living Lakes Initiative* (Ducks Unlimited), which seeks to protect shallow lakes and floodplain wetlands, and promotes sound restoration of lost or degraded habitat.

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D. Budget

Budget Item	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
Personnel			
Contracts	\$ 1,150,000.00	\$110,000.00	
Equipment/Tools/Supplies			
Fee Acquisition			
Easement Acquisition			
Easement Stewardship			
Professional Services			
Travel			
Additional Budget Items			
TOTAL	\$ 1,150,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	

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.*

Title	Name	Amount.
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N/A

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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
Red Wing Wildlife League	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	
TOTAL	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	

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*

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Table 1 Accomplish- ments	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore	<i>Restore 30 acres of shallow open water wetlands by excavation of accumulated sediment</i>		<i>Restore 18 acres of high wildlife value lowland hardwood forest by planting</i>	<i>48 acres</i>
Protect				
Enhance				

Table 2 Sections Impacted and Impact Quantifier	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore	<i>SE Forest Mississippi River Floodplain shallow open water wetland restoration 30 acres</i>		<i>SE Forest high wildlife value lowland hardwood forest 18 acres</i>	<i>48 acres</i>
Protect				
Enhance				

Table 3 Recommend Fund Allocation	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore	<i>1,155,794.00</i>		<i>\$ 144,000.00</i>	<i>\$ 100,206.00</i>
Protect				
Enhance				

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Table 4 Leverage \$	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore	\$ 70,000.00		\$ 70,000.00	
Protect				
Enhance				

Table 5 Acquisition Data	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability				
Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability				
Permanent Easement				

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. **See Exhibit 1 – Attached.**

Milestone	Date	Measure
Field Investigation and survey of project site	Fall 2010	Site investigation and survey for design
Design Documents and permits	Winter 2010	Finalize Design and permitting for project
Construction implementation	Fall/Winter 2011	30 acres - shallow open water wetland restored. Vegetative restoration started
Vegetative Restoration Finalized & veg. maintenance	Spring 2012	18 – acres high wildlife value lowland hardwood forest restored. Vegetative restoration - 10 acres shallow fringe

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I. Relationship to Your Current Budget

RWWL currently has funds in its account to provide a minimum 10% match required for this L-SOHC project.

J. How Will the Habitat Improvements Be Sustained?

The strategic design of the restoration, along with efforts within the watershed to reduce erosion will minimize the risks of future sedimentation of the restored shallow lake/wetland. Ongoing vegetation management of the area will be accomplished by RWWL members, or potential through hiring a restoration contractor to assist with activities that are beyond RWWL's in-house capability (e.g. prescribed burning).

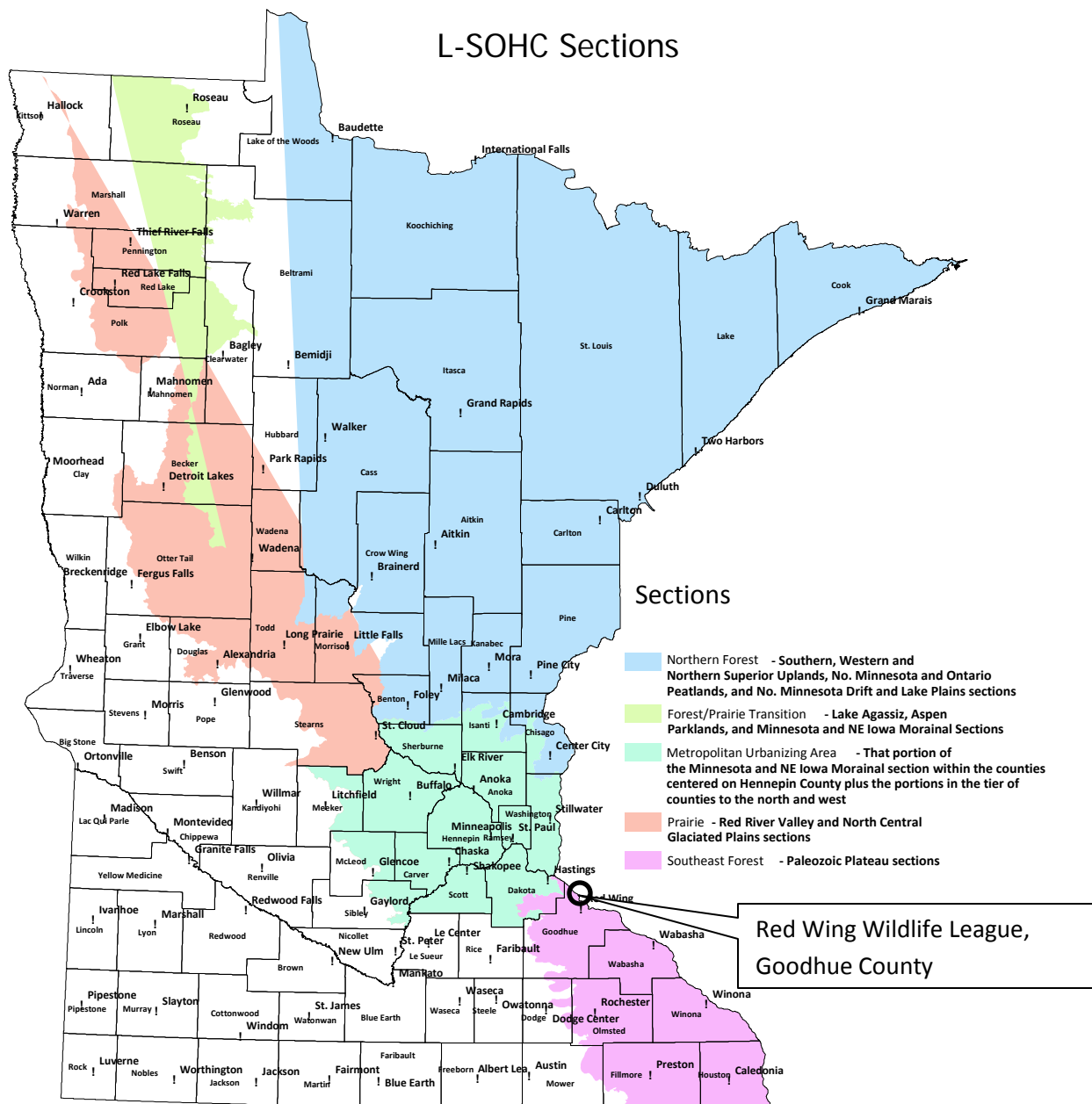
K. Attach a list of your projects listing their county location and edit the map of Minnesota on the next page to show each project as a symbol.

Double left click to bring up the map editor. Symbols should be on the left side of the pop-up banner at the top of your screen or at the bottom left depending on your software.

If you can't bring up the interactive map editor follow these instructions:

1. Make a paper copy of the map,
2. By hand place symbols on the map corresponding to the location of the projects in your proposal,
3. Scan the marked map to a pdf, and
4. Insert the marked pdf map as the last page in your submission.

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