

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

**Program Title: # 41 Swan Lake Area Wildlife Management Area land acquisition
(Nicollet County)**

Date: November 2, 2009

Manager's Name: Pell Johnson
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Funds Requested (\$000s)	Council Funding Request	Out-Year Projections of Needs		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Outdoor Heritage Fund	\$1,799,400	\$151,832	\$5000	0

A. Summary

Our project will acquire and develop 320 acres of new Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) lands for public hunting, trapping and compatible outdoor uses consistent with the Outdoor Recreation Act (M.S. 86A.05, Subd.8). Parcels will also be consistent with the Swan Lake Area "Project" initiated in 1985 and consistent with the recommendations of The Citizens Advisory Committee report of 2002 "Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition – The Next 50 Years". Lands will be acquired from willing sellers through established acquisition processes governed by statute, rule and policy. Initial site development of new WMAs is included in our program.

B. Background Information

1. What is the problem or opportunity being addressed?

The Swan Lake Area Project was initiated in 1985 to solve long standing problems associated with the important waterfowl area. Furthermore the Citizens Advisory Committee on WMA acquisitions recommended that due to

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rising land costs and continued habitat loss, acquisition efforts should be accelerated.

2. What action will be taken?

The SLAWA will work with the DNR to identify high priority potential wetland complex lands for sale from willing sellers within the Swan Lake Area "Project" and in accordance to The Citizens Report noted above. The SLAWA will follow established land acquisition procedures and, if successful in acquiring, will then develop the land to DNR standards using funds from this program to make the new parcel fully functional as a WMA within the first two years of acquisition. This will include boundary surveys and signage, user access and parking facilities, well and septic closure, building and dump disposal, restoration of shallow temporary and seasonal wetlands and cover bare ground with native prairie vegetation.

3. Who will take action and when?

The SLAWA will begin immediately, upon approval of L-SOHC, to purchase potential acquisitions already identified and approved by DNR for possible acquisition. Upon approval of funding through the Legislature, the DNR will begin appraisals to acquire project acreage goal. Development of parcels will follow with completion within 3 years of acquisition.

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

The DNR will be consulted to ensure that strategic conservation lands are purchased to fit prioritized lands within L-SOHC Sections.

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

Acquisition of wildlife lands will focus on protecting and restoring keys habitat important to waterfowl with an emphasis on completing and expanding existing WMAs and other protected lands within habitat complexes. Large blocks of wildlife lands provide a wider range of management options, habitat diversity and wildlife use. Each parcel will be developed to enhance the native habitat characteristics appropriate for the location and the recreation potential for the citizens of Minnesota.

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

Most habitat changes will occur immediately as parcels are transferred to the DNR for management. Acquisition of land typically takes up to one year to complete. Habitat developments will be implemented within two years of acquisition and complete within 3 years of implementation.

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?

Routine maintenance will be accomplished by DNR Area Wildlife staff as part of their public land management responsibilities. Priority will be given to acquiring additions to existing WMAs to increase efficiency of routine maintenance. Periodic enhancements such as invasive species removal, prescribed burning, supplemental vegetation planting, or wetland and water level management will be accomplished through grant funding or other sources.

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

Acquisition and enhancement of priority habitats provide permanent protection of keys lands within the Swan Lake "Project" Area. .

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.

Lands will be acquired by the SLAWA in fee title and transferred to DNR as State Wildlife Management Areas.

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

The SLAWA is a 501-c-3 organization subject to IRS rules and has worked for many years in protecting habitat in the Swan Lake area. The group will provide appropriate information available upon request by the L-SOHC and the Legislature.

12. Why will this strategy work?

The SLAWA has acquired 500 acres of land as WMAs since 1985 and has the support from conservationists, hunters, and legislators.

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

All fee title lands acquired and turned over to the State as WMA's must be approved by resolution of the County Boards of Commissioners.

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

☐ **YES** ☒ **NO**

County Board resolutions are typically sought only after an agreement to purchase has been reached with the landowner.

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

 NO

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

 YES

 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? N/A

 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?

 As long as SLAWA exists - Indefinite Years

In 2002, the Citizens Advisory Committee recommended 50 years of accelerated acquisition to acquire an additional 702,200 acres needed to meet conservation goals. This program will be ongoing as opportunity and needs arise.

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

 Northern Forest

 Forest/Prairie Transition

 Southeast Forest

 X Prairie

 Metropolitan Urbanizing Area

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

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☒ YES

☐ NO

If yes, please explain.

These two parcels that are critical as waterfowl habitat will be lost if not acted upon in the immediate future. The current landowners are not willing to wait indefinitely and the opportunity may be lost if not acted upon soon.

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

☐ YES

☒ 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?

☐ YES

☒ NO

If yes explain the model briefly.

The DNR uses a priority setting process that focuses proposed acquisitions on lands of greatest conservation protection need as part of existing habitat complexes. We follow their lead.

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

Acquisition and sound ecological management of lands focused within habitat complexes has proven to provide optimum wildlife habitat and diversity of species by targeting efforts in areas that build on existing conservation assets.

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

Appropriate land purchase offers will be selected according to the following criteria by planning section:

In order of priority:

1. In-holdings/additions to existing WMAs
2. Wetland/Grassland complexes
3. Shallow Lakes/large wetlands
4. County Biological Site – native prairie community
5. Collaborative partnerships
6. Habitat Corridor

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

Minnesota's Long Range Duck Recovery Plan lists the objective of restoring a breeding population of 1 million ducks by 2056. The primary strategy is the protection and restoration of 2 million additional acres of habitat.

The Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan identifies habitat loss and degradation as the number one driver of change for wildlife in Minnesota. The plan further states that the prairie regions have experienced the greatest amount of habitat loss of any region.

Citizens report Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition – The Next 50 Years recommends acquisition goals of an additional 702,200 acres of WMAs over the next 50 years.

D. Budget

Budget Item	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
Personnel	0	0	0
Contracts	0	151,832	5,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies	0	0	0
Fee Acquisition	1,7899,400	0	0
Easement Acquisition			
Easement Stewardship			
Professional Services	0	0	0
Travel	0	0	0
Additional Budget Items			
TOTAL	1,799,400	151,832	5000

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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None

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
None			
TOTAL			

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>Restore native habitat complexes on 297 ac. of new acquired WMA</i>		
Protect		<i>Protect 320 ac. of wildlife lands through fee acquisition</i>		
Enhance				

Table 2 Sections Impacted and Impact Quantifier	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Northern Forests				
Restore				
Protect				
Enhance				
Forest Prairie Transition				
Restore				
Protect				
Enhance				
Southeast Forest				
Restore				
Protect				
Enhance				
Prairie Section				
Restore		<i>Restore 297ac.of native habitat on new WMA</i>		
Protect		<i>Acquire 320ac.of new WMA with emphasis on protecting existing native prairie ecosystems and prairie/wetland complexes.</i>		
Enhance				
Met/Urbanizing				
Restore				
Protect				
Enhance				

Table 3 Recommend Fund Allocation	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore		156,832		
Protect		1,799,400		
Enhance				

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

Table 5 Acquisition Data	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability		320 acres		.
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.

Milestone	Date	Measure
Protect through fee acquisition	6/30/2011	320 ac
Implement Initial Development Plan	6/31/2012	297 ac
Protect through fee acquisition	6/31/2012	0 ac
Implement Initial Development Plan	6/31/2013	0 ac

I. Relationship to Your Current Budget

J. How Will the Habitat Improvements Be Sustained?

Priority acquisitions will be lands associated with existing protected lands or in large blocks that will foster economies of scale and location. Ongoing maintenance will be accomplished through routine management activities accomplished by our Area Wildlife

office in Nicollet. Periodic enhancements will be accomplished by existing staff or through contract .

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.

Swan Lake WMA - Wiwi Bay Unit – Nicollet County (240 acres)

Swan Lake WMA - Courtland Middle Unit (Nicollet County (80 acres)



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