

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Laws of Minnesota 2011 Final Report

Date: January 10, 2014

Program or Project Title: Protect Key Forest Habitat Lands - Cass County, Phase 2

Funds Recommended: \$604,000

Manager's Name: Joshua Stevenson

Title:

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Legislative Citation: ML 2011, Ch. 6, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 3(f)

Appropriation Language: \$604,000 the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Cass County to acquire land in fee for forest wildlife habitat. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

County Locations: Cass

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Northern Forest

Activity Type:

- Protect in Fee

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Forest

Abstract:

Project has protected forest wildlife habitat in central Minnesota through fee title acquisition of key forest tracts. Title of lands acquired are held by Cass County in Fee.

Activity Detail

Design and Scope of Work:

Problem: Central Minnesota, especially the area in Cass County from Brainerd/Baxter to Walker, has and will continue to see some of the fastest human population growth in Minnesota. This growth led to increased demands/use of this area, its natural resources and related public land base that needs to support this growth. Development of these parcels resulted in the loss of Jack Pine barrens in the landscape of southern Cass County. Forest tracts currently undeveloped, held by Potlatch and other private property owners, are currently being sold to private developers. These lands often provide access to existing public lands for resource management, are in holdings in otherwise unfragmented landscapes, create contiguous wildlife corridors, and protect larger blocks of land especially useful for stand level management of habitat.

Opportunity: Key forest tracts (i.e. in-holdings in large public land tracts, management access issues, etc.) are being considered or currently being offered for sale by a large industrial forest owner (Potlatch Corporation) and private property owners in this area. Depressed market conditions and a willingness by current owners to sell at this time is an opportunity that should be addressed now since it is narrow and may close (properties sold) at any time. The strategy is to acquire lands that hold together unfragmented landscapes, avoid incompatible in holding development or creates habitat corridors. The land acquired has existing forest access roads that have been used for management access for years. The sale of these lands to private individuals has already resulted in the loss of access for resource management on public lands. The acquired lands were not pursued for convenience of management.

The identified parcels play a key role in future management plans of the Jack Pine Barrens including the role of fire as a management tool. The loss of these parcels to private ownership will result in lost access. Management of adjacent public lands will be limited to frozen ground conditions. This will eliminate management tools such as site preparation for Jack Pine plantings and aerial seeding as well as prescribed burns for Jack Pine regeneration. This type of management requires year round access. The acquired lands provide year round management access to existing public lands in the Jack Pine barrens landscape. The acquisition of these lands has provided permanent year round access for forest management as well as protecting habitat in and around the surrounding areas.

The Cass County Forest Resource Management Plan directs the County to acquire lands of this nature whenever

possible to protect our management access. The Cass County Comprehensive plan requires no net loss of acres of public land and local unit of government input on all purchases and land sales. This project met the requirements of both plans and required stakeholder input as part of the project. The local units of government with the lands to be purchased were contacted for input before acquisitions were made. Purchases were supported by both the County and local units of government. The Cass County Board of Commissioners has a strong history of supporting land sales and acquisitions that have local unit of government support.

Planning

The Cass County Forest Resource Management Plan directs the County to acquire lands of this nature whenever possible. The Cass County Comprehensive plan requires no net loss of acres of public land (Page 34 & 57) (FRMP Page 32) and local unit of government input on all purchases and sales of land. Priorities supported in these plans that were accomplished in this project include: access to inaccessible public land, consolidation of ownership, management for wildlife habitat, and landscape level management between multiple land management agencies. The lands acquired are open to the public for fishing and the taking of game.

Planning

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation

Plans Addressed:

- Minnesota Forest Resource Council Landscape Plans

LSOHC Statewide Priorities:

- Address conservation opportunities that will be lost if not immediately acted on
- Allow public access. This comes into play when all other things about the request are approximately equal
- Are able to leverage effort and/or other funds to supplement any OHF appropriation
- Are ongoing, successful, transparent and accountable programs addressing actions and targets of one or more of the ecological sections
- Produce multiple enduring conservation benefits
- Provide Minnesotans with greater public access to outdoor environments with hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities

LSOHC Northern Forest Section Priorities:

- Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas
- Protect forestland through acquisition or easement to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds:

- No Relationships Listed

Sustainability and Maintenance:

The Cass County Land Department manages all County Administered lands under our Forest Resource Management Plan. This management plan requires that operations are maintained from revenue generated from timber sales. Cass County has a long history of covering our operation costs with timber revenue. The lands acquired are managed under this same plan. These lands are not eligible for PILT payments. MN Statute 477A.11 defines lands that are eligible as being held by the state in fee or tax forfeited. The acquired lands for this project are held in fee by Cass County and therefore are not eligible for PILT Payments. There will be no ongoing cost to the State of MN for the acquisition of these lands.

Outcomes

Programs in the northern forest region:

- Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation
- Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species
- Landlocked public properties have increased access for land managers

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount: \$604,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	Request	Spent	Cash Leverage (anticipated)	Cash Leverage (received)	Leverage Source	Total (original)	Total (final)
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$37,000	\$37,000	Cass County, Cass County	\$37,000	\$37,000
Contracts	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$604,000	\$604,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	Cass County	\$618,000	\$618,000
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Professional Services	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000	Cass County	\$2,000	\$2,000
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Total	\$604,000	\$604,000	\$53,000	\$53,000		\$657,000	\$657,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	Spent	Cash Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Resource Manager	0.25	0.00	\$0	\$18,500	Cass County	\$18,500
Land Commissioner	0.25	0.00	\$0	\$18,500	Cass County	\$18,500
Total	0.50	0.00	\$0	\$37,000		\$37,000

Output Tables

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands (original)	Wetlands (final)	Prairies (original)	Prairies (final)	Forest (original)	Forest (final)	Habitats (original)	Habitats (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	379	431	0	0	379	431
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	379	431	0	0	379	431

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands (original)	Wetlands (final)	Prairies (original)	Prairies (final)	Forest (original)	Forest (final)	Habitats (original)	Habitats (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$604,000	\$604,000	\$0	\$0	\$604,000	\$604,000
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$604,000	\$604,000	\$0	\$0	\$604,000	\$604,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban (original)	Metro Urban (final)	Forest Prairie (original)	Forest Prairie (final)	SE Forest (original)	SE Forest (final)	Prairie (original)	Prairie (final)	N Forest (original)	N Forest (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	379	431	379	431
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	379	431	379	431

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban (original)	Metro Urban (final)	Forest Prairie (original)	Forest Prairie (final)	SE Forest (original)	SE Forest (final)	Prairie (original)	Prairie (final)	N Forest (original)	N Forest (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$604,000	\$604,000	\$604,000	\$604,000
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$604,000	\$604,000	\$604,000	\$604,000

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles (original)

0 miles

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles (final)

0 miles

Parcel List

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Cass

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Franklin Property	13430218	173	\$242,000	No	Full	Full
Gunderson Property	13929229	20	\$35,000	No	Full	Full
Homebrook Property	13530226	78	\$92,000	No	Full	Full
Homebrook Property	13530223	80	\$100,000	No	Full	Full
Powers Property	13930202	40	\$67,600	No	Full	Full
Woodrow Property	14029233	40	\$67,400	No	Full	Full

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Completed Parcel: Franklin Property

# of Total Acres:	173
County:	Cass
Township:	134
Range:	30
Direction:	2
Section:	18
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	
# of Acres: Forest:	173
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	
Amount of Shoreline:	0 (Linear Feet)
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	No -
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Signs will be erected after Certificate of Survey is complete.
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	Cass County
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Joshua Stevenson
Annual Reporting Address:	PO Box 25
Annual Reporting City:	Backus
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	56435
Annual Reporting Email:	josh.stevenson@co.cass.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	2189473338
Purchase Date:	January 09, 2012
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$242,000
Appraised Value:	\$242,000
Professional Service Costs:	\$820
Assessed Value:	\$310,100
Total Project Cost:	\$243,664
Fees Received:	\$0
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	Local Unit of Government -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Cass County Land Department

Completed Parcel: Gunderson Property

# of Total Acres:	20
County:	Cass
Township:	139
Range:	29
Direction:	2
Section:	29
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	
# of Acres: Forest:	20
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	
Amount of Shoreline:	0 (Linear Feet)
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	No -
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Signs will be erected following Certificate of Survey.
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	Cass County
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Joshua Stevenson
Annual Reporting Address:	PO Box 25
Annual Reporting City:	Backus
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	56435
Annual Reporting Email:	josh.stevenson@co.cass.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	2189473338
Purchase Date:	October 12, 2012
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$35,000
Appraised Value:	\$35,000
Professional Service Costs:	\$660
Assessed Value:	\$57,600
Total Project Cost:	\$35,868
Fees Received:	\$0
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	Local Unit of Government -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Cass County Land Department

Completed Parcel: Homebrook Property

# of Total Acres:	78
County:	Cass
Township:	135
Range:	30
Direction:	2
Section:	26
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	
# of Acres: Forest:	78
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	
Amount of Shoreline:	0 (Linear Feet)
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Yes
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	Cass County
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Joshua Stevenson
Annual Reporting Address:	PO Box 25
Annual Reporting City:	Backus
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	56435
Annual Reporting Email:	josh.stevenson@co.cass.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	2189473338
Purchase Date:	March 16, 2012
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$92,000
Appraised Value:	\$92,000
Professional Service Costs:	\$389
Assessed Value:	\$123,400
Total Project Cost:	\$92,728
Fees Received:	\$0
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	Local Unit of Government -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Cass County Land Department

Completed Parcel: Homebrook Property

# of Total Acres:	80
County:	Cass
Township:	135
Range:	30
Direction:	2
Section:	23
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	
# of Acres: Forest:	80
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	
Amount of Shoreline:	0 (Linear Feet)
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Yes
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	Cass County
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Joshua Stevenson
Annual Reporting Address:	PO Box 25
Annual Reporting City:	Backus
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	56435
Annual Reporting Email:	josh.stevenson@co.cass.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	2189473338
Purchase Date:	March 16, 2012
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$100,000
Appraised Value:	\$100,000
Professional Service Costs:	\$389
Assessed Value:	\$123,400
Total Project Cost:	\$100,728
Fees Received:	\$0
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	Local Unit of Government -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Cass County Land Department

Completed Parcel: Powers Property

of Total Acres: 40
County: Cass
Township: 139
Range: 30
Direction: 2
Section: 02
of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:
of Acres: Forest: 38.24
of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:
Amount of Shoreline: 398.6 (Linear Feet)
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable): Jack's Lake
No -
Has there been signage erected at the site: Signs be will erected following Certificate of Survey.
Annual Reporting Organization Name: Cass County
Annual Reporting Manager Name: Joshua Stevenson
Annual Reporting Address: PO Box 25
Annual Reporting City: Backus
Annual Reporting State: MN
Annual Reporting Zip: 56435
Annual Reporting Email: josh.stevenson@co.cass.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone: 2189473338
Purchase Date: March 09, 2013
Acquisition Title:
Purchase Price: \$81,600
Appraised Value: \$81,600
Professional Service Costs: \$920
Assessed Value: \$97,200
Total Project Cost: \$82,835
Fees Received: \$0
Donations: \$0
Related Parties:
Property Managed By: Local Unit of Government -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager: Cass County Land Department

Completed Parcel: Woodrow Property

# of Total Acres:	40
County:	Cass
Township:	140
Range:	29
Direction:	2
Section:	33
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	
# of Acres: Forest:	40
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	
Amount of Shoreline:	0 (Linear Feet)
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	No -
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Signs will be erected following a Certificate of Survey.
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	Cass County
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Joshua Stevenson
Annual Reporting Address:	PO Box 25
Annual Reporting City:	Backus
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	56435
Annual Reporting Email:	josh.stevenson@co.cass.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	2189473338
Purchase Date:	March 09, 2013
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$67,400
Appraised Value:	\$67,400
Professional Service Costs:	\$800
Assessed Value:	\$90,400
Total Project Cost:	\$68,468
Fees Received:	\$0
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	Local Unit of Government -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Cass County Land Department