

Main Request for Funding Form

**Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Fiscal Year 2012**

Program or Project Title: Conservation on the Prairie for Future Generations

Funds Requested (\$000s)	Funding Request	OHF Out-Year Projections of Needs		
	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Outdoor Heritage Fund	\$ 1,322,000	0	0	0

Manager's Name: *Kathy Smith*
Organization: Martin Soil & Water Conservation District
Street Address: 923 North State Street, Suite 110
City: Fairmont **State:** MN **Zip:** 56031
Telephone: 507 235-6680
E-Mail: kathy.smith@frontiernet.net
Organization Web Site: www.martinswcd.net

County Location: *Martin SWCD is located in south central Minnesota.*

Ecological Planning Regions: *[check all that apply – to]*

- Northern Forest Forest/Prairie Transition Southeast Forest
 Prairie Metro/Urban

Activity Type: *[check all that apply]*

- Protect Restore Enhance

Priority Resources addressed by activity: *[check all that apply]*

- Wetlands Forests Prairie Habitat

Project Abstract

Conservation on the Prairie for Future Generations

Enhancement and protection of our parks and native pothole prairie habitats by eradicating noxious invasive plants will improve connectivity and acquiring 163 acres will increase recreational opportunity in southern Minnesota.

Project Narrative

This request for funding is two-fold: 1) Enhancement of public lands by removing noxious weeds and invasive species that threaten the ecological balance of the city and county parks. The natural areas on the parklands include lakeshores, woodland forests, oak savannas, and prairies. This project is vital to the future of our native plants, wildlife, and migratory water fowl in this area. 2) The protection of 163 acres will add additional habitat to form a new Wildlife Management Area (WMA), where there is a high demand and urgent need for more recreational opportunity. Of those 163 acres, 105 acres will be acquired in fee title and 58 acres will be placed in a permanent easement.

Martin County's geologic make-up is ideal for the formation of the many lakes, streams, and prairies that developed in this prairie pothole region. Enhancement of our parks is vital for the continuation of our rapidly declining native habitats and wildlife. The focus toward removing invasive weeds and non-native species on public land is necessary to preserve native vegetation that are being choked out due to aggressive growth of buckthorn and other invasive exotic plants. Common buckthorn has been placed on the "**Restricted noxious weeds**" list under Minnesota Rules MR 1505.0732. It invades oak forests, savannas, prairies and riparian woods, completely eliminating native plant diversity in the understory and along shorelines. The acquisition of lands to increase Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's) will protect some fine examples of native prairie and wetland habitats.

Design and scope of work

Martin SWCD has received support from the Martin County Commissioners and the City of Fairmont to proceed with funding projects that would protect forested areas on public lands that are being choked off by invasive species and provide educational opportunities to residents and park visitors. The critical areas that need immediate attention are located along shorelines that have steep embankments that have been overtaken by buckthorn and other non-native vegetation. The removal of invasive species on steep embankments will be labor intensive as it will require hand removal and treatment of individual stumps. Fish and wildlife are highly dependent on diversely vegetated shorelines that provide healthy spawning areas, as well as habitat for feeding, resting, and mating life stages. Developing a healthy riparian buffer strip by using local ecotype native plants along lakeshores and stream banks, will capture nutrient run-off from streets and agriculture fields improving water quality in our shallow lakes.

The enhancement section of this project will remove the extensive infiltration of noxious weeds like buckthorn, and to remove other non-native vegetation such as reed canary grass and

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brome in the natural areas of the public parks, and on the acquired land parcels. vegetation buffers will be installed in riparian habitats on streams and lakes to reduce the impacts of contaminant loading to surface water habitats. Some of the larger tracts of public land that require work in the City of Fairmont, is the 160 acre Day Farm that has been converted to a city park located on Lake Sisseton and the 260 acre multi-use Cedar Creek Park located on Amber Lake. One of the county parks that we feel needs the most attention is the 80 acre Cedar-Hanson Park in Trimont, MN. The Fox Lake Conservation league has already pledged \$5000.00 for weed management activities if this proposal is approved.

The District will contract with the City of Fairmont Forest Personnel and an ISA Certified Arborist for Martin County Projects. The public land will be marked off in segments and work will begin on the areas that have been identified as overtaken or in imminent danger of being overtaken by noxious weeds and non-native species. The District will also contract with the Minnesota Conservation Corps to provide the labor to remove the non-native vegetation and to chemically treat the areas. The District will hire a Project Coordinator to administer this extensive project, oversee contract personnel for the invasive plant removal, and to oversee the land acquisitions.

Action Plan for year 1: Native plant identification will be conducted and any known locations of endangered or threatened species will be marked and protected with fencing; invasive species will be located and waypoints placed into GPS for later relocation and removal; stumps will be treated, bare areas will be mulched with double-shredded mulch; native plants will be replanted; photo documentation will be extensively used before, during, and after invasive removal; photo's will be displayed on our website: [.martinswcd.](http://martinswcd)

Action Plan for year 2: Martin SWCD Staff or seasonal personnel will be hired to maintain the site area and treat any new regrowth of invasive species. This step is crucial as it may take several chemical applications before complete eradication of noxious weeds and non-native vegetation.

Action Plan for year 1 and 2: Articles and photos will be submitted to local media for education purposes. The project will be discussed during some segments of our weekly radio show. These actions fall in line with the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan Section B. Maintain/restore critical habitat at the land/water interface; 6. Education, 7. Keeping water on the landscape, 8. Restoration and rehabilitation – shallow lakes, and 9. Restoration and rehabilitation – wetlands.

In this project, Martin County and Martin SWCD is partnering with its counterparts through the Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance (GBERBA) and the Greater Blue Earth Cooperative Weed Management Area (GBE CWMA). The following counties in their entirety are members of the GBE CWMA: Blue Earth, Cottonwood, Faribault, Freeborn, Jackson, Martin, Waseca and Watonwan. GBERBA fully supports the components of this project designed to remove invasive species and replace them with local ecotype native species. GBERBA recognizes the benefits

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that high quality fish and wildlife habitat has on clean water and improved water quality, one of its major concerns.

The protect portion of the project will be to acquire 163 high quality acres that are located in Martin County. Martin SWCD is also partnering with the MN DNR Wildlife Manager with support from Martin County Conservation Alliance members, including the Fox Lake Conservation League, Martin County Conservation Club, Inc., and MN Waterfowl Association. Support for habitat restoration has also been pledged by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Windom office, which Martin SWCD has a cooperative agreement to help fund restoration projects. These partners have provided financial support for numerous wetland restoration projects where supplemental funds were needed to get the restorations completed.

The 40 acre Garth Carlson and 65 acre Martin County Conservation Club, Inc. parcels provide habitat for declining, at-risk species and provide the nucleus for a new WMA. The parcels are adjacent to a 40 acre RIM parcel and they encompass an extensive wetland complex. Acquiring these two parcels will maintain habitat connectivity. Wetland protection and restoration are major benefits from the acquisition of these parcels that are located in Martin County.

The John Carlson parcel is a 58 acre riparian buffer along approximately 7,200 feet of Cedar Lake shoreline and 1575 feet of the north creek bank of Cedar Run. A perpetual conservation easement through the RIM program in coordination with the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources is proposed for this parcel. The intent is to protect this shoreline and stream bank from development, and to maintain and enhance the native oak/mixed forest, oak savanna and prairie habitat that is natural on this site. This site will provide a “no impact zone” in the form of a riparian buffer composed of native vegetation as outlined as a priority action item on page 45 of the Martin County Water Plan. Protecting and enhancing this buffer will provide habitat to benefit many species of fish and wildlife.

Action Plan for Year 1: Acquire the lands listed in Attachment D, Parcel Listing; eradicate noxious weeds and non-native plantings. This action follows Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan Section A. Maintain or restore critical land habitat, #2. Acquisition – protection of land habitats.

Action Plan for Year 2 and 3: Conduct weed maintenance on acquired parcels.

Planning

Martin SWCD’s approach to conservation of our natural resources and remediation of degraded habitats is to look at the issues across the landscape and implement BMP’s with the watershed in mind. We followed the guidance provided by the Minnesota State Conservation and Protection Plan in developing this project.

Martin County has a varied landscape of planted and native woodlands, natural oak savannas, prairies and riparian areas along the many streams and lakes. We have located endangered and

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threatened plant species that are on the federal and state lists. Acquiring these properties will ensure the continued growth and study of these rare species. Acquisition will also keep biological diversity on the landscape. Martin County's Local Water Plan has identified the need for more woodland and prairie habitat to increase the biological diversity on our landscape. Minnesota State Conservation and Protection Plan Recommendation H1 Protect priority land habitats – pp 63-67, Recommendation H7 Keep water on the landscape – pp. 84-87. Recommendation LU2 Support local and regional conservation – based community planning – pp. 104-108.

Eradicating invasive species along the lakeshores and then replacing with local ecotype native plants will provide a buffer in which to trap nutrient runoff and to stop erosion of the shoreline. Providing a buffer area will also begin to restore near-shore habitat for aquatic populations. Education efforts will be more fruitful when shoreline owners see the benefits of restoring native vegetation. The use of local ecotype native species to revegetate the shorelines will ensure continued species growth. We have many local species that are in sharp decline due to land use changes and the wide spread use of seeding with the same 25 common species. We need to ensure that less common species are also used to revegetate landscapes to keep those less common species off the threatened and endangered list. Minnesota State Conservation and Protection Plan Recommendation H2 Protect critical shorelands of streams and lakes – pp. 67-74, Recommendation H4 Restore and protect shallow lakes – pp. 78-79, Recommendation H6 Protect and restore critical in-water habitat of lakes and streams – pp. 81-84, Recommendation H7 Keep water on the landscape – pp.84-87, Recommendation LU2 Support local and regional conservation – based community planning – pp. 104-108.

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan identifies two strategies that align with Martin County's Goal of acquisition of habitat and to enhance the landscape. The DNR's goal is to "acquire, protect, and restore Minnesota's natural resource base" and to "develop and maintain a sustainable outdoor recreation infrastructure. With the acquisition of the properties listed we would expand the outdoor experience for residents and visitors to Martin County.

The DNR also has a 50 year plan in which they want to acquire properties for WMA's and the previously discussed properties would make ideal WMA's or SNA's.

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds

Martin SWCD has recently completed a Prairie Ecosystem Restoration Project funded by the Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources whereby local ecotype plant materials were located, collected, seeded or replanted on permanently protected easements. By eradicating invasive species from our parks, the invasive plant seed bank will be reduced which has the potential for spreading into our planted easements and remnant native habitats.

Martin SWCD is dedicated to preserving local ecotype native plants within Martin County. The District Administers the following grants:

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- Greater Blue Earth Cooperative Weed Management Area (GBE CWMA - 8 Counties)
- Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) Project ended June 30, 2010
- Native Buffer Cost-Share Program
- Surface Water Assessment Grant (SWAG) Project ended June 30, 2010
- DNR Shoreland Habitat Grant
- Clean Water Partnership (CWP)

The District has developed successful projects with federal, state and local funding. We have developed conservation partnerships with conservation clubs, non-profit groups such as 4-H Clubs, etc. We have worked hard to get sustainable best practices on the land in both rural and urban settings. We have just initiated an outreach program to the urban areas and have been successful in providing education and effective conservation solutions through the use of rain gardens, buffer strips, permeable pavers, composting and rain barrels.

The GBE CWMA and pending LCCMR grant proposal will be components of the LSOHC Project. The purpose of the CWMA is to work across jurisdictional boundaries to address invasive species issues. The CWMA is a Board of Water and Soil Resources funded project and provides funding to public or private entities within the boundaries of the 8 designated counties to remove invasive weeds. We have applied for an LCCMR-funded project that will focus on recovery of declining at-risk native species. It will involve the identification, seed collection and propagation of native, at-risk woodland and prairie species.

The Native Buffer Cost-Share Program is another BWSR funded project. The Martin SWCD Native Buffer Cost-share Program is designed to increase the availability of Martin County origin native plant material, while protecting surface and ground water. The Native Buffer Cost-share Program fits well with the locally established goals of using local ecotype native plant materials to provide a “no impact zone” within a minimum of 200 feet of surface waters regardless of land use. This is a Martin County Local Water Plan action item. Planting filter strips or buffers around wells and along surface water bodies, helps protect and improve water quality. Using plant materials that originated from local native populations helps to preserve and increase the amount of native plant material available for future restoration projects. A primary focus is to provide a source for species that are currently unavailable and species that seem to be rare and/or in decline locally.

The CWMA and the Native Buffer Cost-Share Program fits well with the LSOHC priorities. Enhancing areas on public lands for habitat and wildlife will be achieved by removing invasive species and repopulating the native plant population with native local ecotypes. The District has been identifying, collecting and propagating seeds to preserve those very objectives. By using funds from LSOHC, Martin SWCD will be able to take a more active role in the Invasive Species battle.

Relationship to Current Organizational Budget

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Our traditional funding source is through several sources: Federal, State and county funding. The District also receives a small amount for miscellaneous services such as the Tree and Seeding Programs. Martin SWCD will continue to operate under our current budgeting. The LSOHC funds will allow us to acquire land to increase the outdoor recreational experiences of residents and visitors to southern Minnesota.

Projects that we support and are directly involved with come from grants and any funds incurred are spent on those particular grants that we have applied to. This project will allow us to remove an extensive noxious seed source and to protect our native habitats.

Sustainability and Maintenance

Maintenance will be at a manageable level once the vast majority of buckthorn and other non-native vegetation have been eradicated. It will be easier to form volunteer groups or to contact the Boy Scout and 4-H Clubs to conduct weekend weed maintenance in the spring and fall.

Maintenance will include using lopping shears for re-growth or saws for larger limbs, chemical treatment of stumps, replacing non-native vegetation s with local ecotype native plants.

Types of Projects

Fee Acquisition Projects

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition?

Yes No, please explain not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Is the land you plan to acquire free of any other permanent protection?

Yes No, please explain not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Easement Acquisition Projects

Will the eased land be open for public use?

Yes x No, please explain not applicable

If no, please explain here: Easement land will be accessed by permission only, the primary goal is for the parcel to be a wildlife sanctuary and not primarily for hunting.

Will the conservation easement be permanent?

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Yes No, please explain not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Restoration and Enhancement Projects

Is the activity on permanently protected land and/or public waters?

Yes No, please explain not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Does the activity take place on an Aquatic Management Area (AMA), Scientific and Natural Area (SNA), Wildlife Management Area (WMA), or State Forests?

Yes, which ones No, please explain not applicable

If so, please indicate which ones: The enhancement projects will all take place on public parks

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Milestone	Date
Identify invasive plant locations using GPS	33% completion per growing season	July 31, 2013
Remove invasive and non-native vegetation and chemically treat stumps	33% completion per growing season	October 31, 2013
Acquire land	100% completion	June 30, 2014

Attachments:

- A. Budget**
- B. Proposed Outcome Tables 1-5**
- C. Map**
- D. Parcel List**

Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet

[Link Here to definitions of the budget items below.](#)

Total Amount of Request \$ 1,500,000 *From page 1 on the funding form.*

Personnel

Position breakdown here	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
	<i>Project Coordinator</i>	0.15	3	\$ 20,000		
<i>Project Manager</i>	1	3	\$ 210,000			\$ 210,000
<i>Admin Assistant</i>	0.1	3	\$ 10,000			\$ 10,000
<i>Seasonal</i>	0.25	3	\$ 60,000			\$ 60,000
<i>Seasonal</i>	0.25	3		\$ 18,000	<i>Sentence to Serve</i>	\$ 18,000
<i>position 6</i>						\$ -
<i>position 7</i>						\$ -
Total	1.75		\$ 300,000	\$ 18,000	\$ -	\$ 318,000

Budget and Cash Leverage *(All your LSOHC Request Funds must be direct to and necessary for program outcomes.)*

Please describe how you intend to spend the requested funds.

Budget Item	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
	Personnel - auto entered from above	\$ 300,000	\$ 18,000	\$ -
Contracts	\$ 293,238	\$ 10,000	<i>FLCL & MCCC ovr 3 yrs</i>	\$ 303,238
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT (breakout in table 6 & 7)	\$ 282,262	\$ 150,000	<i>FLCL & MCCC ovr 3 yrs</i>	\$ 432,262
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT (breakout in table 6 & 7)				\$ -
Easement Acquisition	\$ 290,000			\$ 290,000
Easement Stewardship	\$ 107,500			\$ 107,500
Travel (in-state)	\$ 3,000			\$ 3,000
Professional Services	\$ 16,000			\$ 16,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$ 5,000			\$ 5,000
Other				\$ 25,000
Capital Equipment				\$ -
Other Equipment/Tools				\$ -
Supplies/Materials	\$ 25,000			\$ 25,000
	\$ 1,322,000	\$ 178,000	\$ -	\$ 1,500,000

Attachment B. Proposed Outcome Tables

Only enter data in the outlined cells

Table 1 and Table 3 column totals should be the same AND Table 2 and Table 4 column totals should be the same

If your project has lakes or shoreline miles instead of land acres, convert miles to acres for Tables 1 and 3 using the following conversion:

Lakeshore = 6 acres per lakeshore mile / Stream & River Shore = 12 acres per linear mile, if both sides

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Describe the scope of the project in acres (use conversion above if needed)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect	90	50	0	23	163
Enhance	5.7	100	350	50	505.7
Total	95.7	150	350	73	

Total Acres (sum of Total column)

668.7 *These two cells should*

Total Acres (sum of Total row)

668.7 *be the same figure.*

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$ -	\$ 322,703			\$ 322,703
Protect		\$ 844,595			\$ 844,595
Enhance		\$ 332,702	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 332,702
Total	\$ -	\$ 1,500,000	\$ -	\$ -	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)

\$ 1,500,000 *These two cells should*

Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 1,500,000 *be the same figure.*

Check to make sure this amount is the same

as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore				63		63
Protect				150		150
Enhance				455.7		455.7
Total	0	0	0	668.7	0	

Total Acres (sum of Total column)

668.7 *These three cells*

Total Acres (sum of Total row)

668.7 *should be the same*

Total Acres from Table 1.

668.7 *figure.*

Attachment B. Proposed Outcome Tables

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore				\$ 322,703		\$ 322,703
Protect				\$ 844,595		\$ 844,595
Enhance				\$ 332,702		\$ 332,702
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,500,000	\$ -	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)

\$ 1,500,000

These two cells should be the same figure.

Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 1,500,000

Check to make sure these amounts are the same

as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

5.25

 # miles of Lakes / Streams / Rivers Shoreline

Table 6. Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in acres)

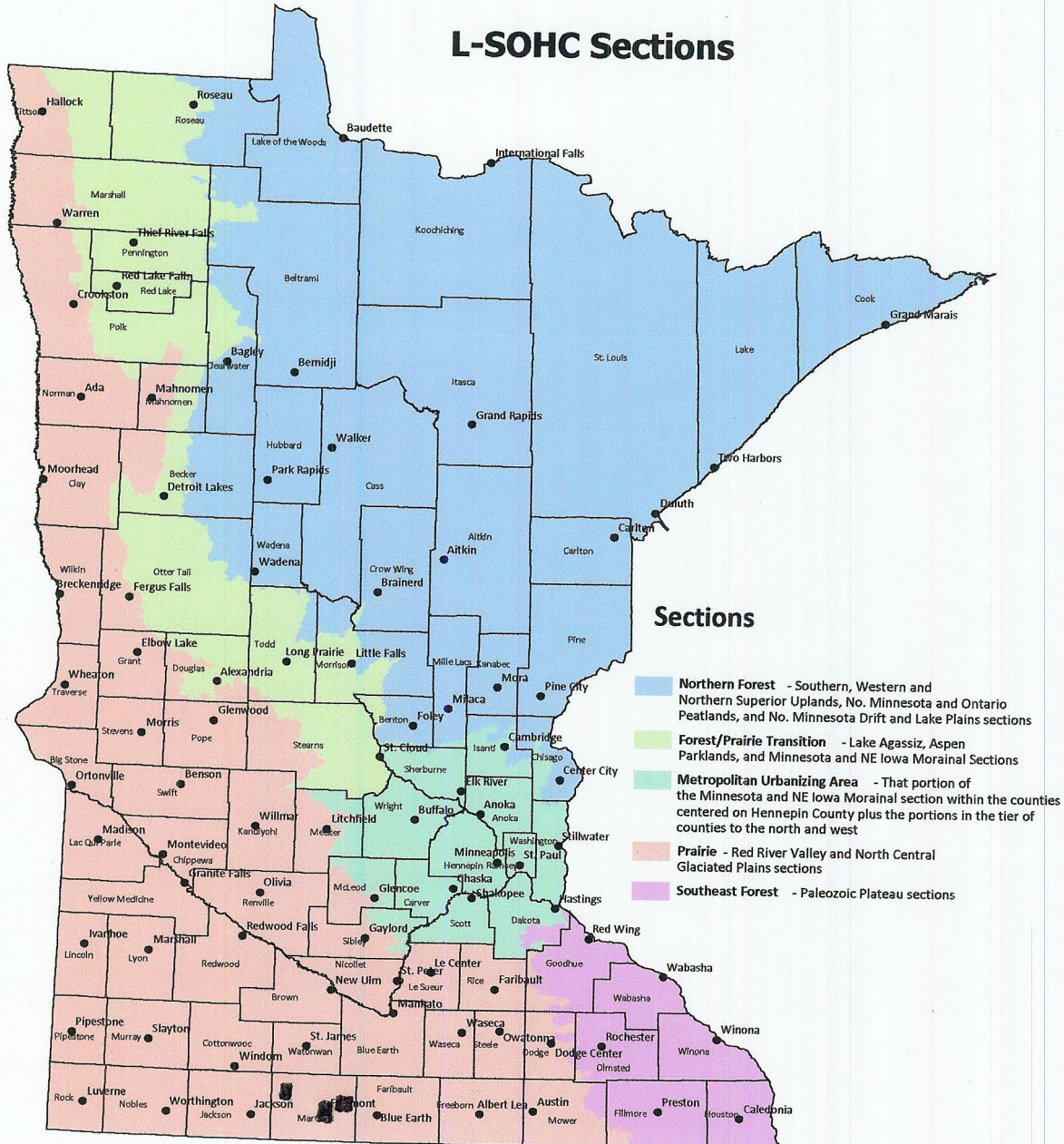
	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability		105			105
Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability					0
Permanent Easement NO State PILT Liability		58			58

Table 7. Estimated Value of Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in dollars)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability		\$ 427,827			\$ 427,827
Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability					\$ -
Permanent Easement NO State PILT Liability		\$ 290,000			\$ 290,000

Attachment C.

L-SOHC Sections



Attachment D. Parcel List

Program Title Conservation on the Prairie for Future Generations

Parcel Name	County	Township	Range	Direction	Section	TRDS	# of acres	Budgetary Estimate (includes administrative, restoration or other related costs and do not include matching money)	Description	Activity R=Restore P=Protect E=Enhance	Any existing protection? (yes/no)	Open to hunting and fishing? (yes/no)
Garth Carlson	Martin	103	29	2	21	10329221	40	\$ 138,000.00		P	N	Y
Martin County Cons. Club Inc.	Martin	103	29	2	20	10329220	65	\$ 180,262.00		P	N	Y
John Carlson	Martin	104	33	2	24	10433224						
John Carlson	Martin	104	33	2	25	10433225	58	\$ 330,000.00		P	N	N*

* Eased land will be accessed by permission only, primary goal is for parcel to be wildlife sanctuary and not primarily for hunting.