

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2012 Accomplishment Plan

Date: 10-24-2011

Program Title: Minnesota Buffers for Water and Wildlife-II

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Funds Recommended: \$2,090,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2012, Ch. X, Art. X, Sec. X, Subd. 2 (a): *(to be completed when signed by Governor)*

Abstract:

This program bridges the resource benefits of the Clean Water Fund and Outdoor Heritage Fund resulting in the protection of 400ac. of enhanced wildlife buffers on private land.

Program Narrative

Design and Scope of Work

This partnership program establishes permanent buffers that provide critical water quality improvements and improved nesting habitat. A buffer of 100' generally serves to protect water quality, while the addition of another 100' for wildlife greatly enhances nesting opportunities for wildlife. Establishing 200' on each side of a stream for a total of 400' in addition to a natural riparian corridor creates block habitat for nesting birds and a critical link between permanently protected habitats. This combination will create a higher functioning habitat while offering enhanced flexibility to private landowners to enroll buffers within their existing farm operations. Clean water fund has provided BWSR \$6m for clean water buffer easements which will be used to match available LSOHC wildlife buffers 1:1.

Planning

Specifically, placing 200 foot grassland buffers on the landscape will achieve the following recommendations identified in the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan – Final Plan, Phase II. 1. Land protection (400 acres) 2. Protect critical shorelands of streams and lakes

(24-48 miles of shoreline permanently protected in grass) 4. Restore and Protect Shallow Lakes (prioritized for protection) 5 Restore land, wetlands, and wetland-associated watersheds 7. Keep water on the landscape (400 acres of grass along streams, rivers, and ditches.

Both the *Long Range Plan for the Ring-neck Pheasant in Minnesota* and the *Long Range Duck Recovery Plan* cite the need for undisturbed grassland nesting cover as a key limiting factor for breeding duck and pheasant populations. Many grassland nesting birds are area sensitive, and generally speaking, the wider the buffers, the better for ducks, pheasants, and many other declining grassland birds.

Minnesota has over 21,500 miles of open drainage ditch and 170,338 miles (each side) of riparian areas within 67 counties that have at least 30% of their land base in cropland (see [://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements/Cultivated Riparian Zone Analysis](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements/Cultivated_Riparian_Zone_Analysis)). Approximately 57,828 acres or 1/3 of this riparian area already contains a buffer of at least 50 feet. The remaining 112,510 miles are in need of buffering. Adding a 100' buffer for water quality would result in 1.3 million acres. Extending these buffers out another 100' for wildlife and long term buffer viability would double that amount for a total of 2.6m acres. It would be our goal to enroll 25% (28,127 mi. or 650,000ac.) of these miles in permanent conservation easements for water quality and wildlife habitat. In addition, Minnesota currently has just over 200,000 acres of Conservation Reserve Program in buffer practices at various stages of their 10-15 year contracts, some soon to expire. The buffer initiative would compliment other programs, both existing and yet to be determined over the next 25 years.

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds

This program will use RIM and leverage USDA conservation programs to deliver multiple enduring conservation benefits of clean water and wildlife habitat. Many Conservation Reserve Program contracts are expiring and we are losing grasslands that buffer our lakes, rivers, streams and ditches.

In addition, buffers for wildlife under this program will be evaluated and prioritized based upon their ability to enhance public land habitats (e.g. WPA's or WMA's), protect expiring CRP lands, add key nesting cover to wetland/upland complexes, provide maximum water quality benefits and/or enhance shallow lakes.

Delivery of this program will be under a coordinated approach that brings together Minnesota BWSR, Minnesota DNR, local SWCD's, Pheasants Forever and other key conservation partners interested in private land conservation. Minnesota BWSR will be the fiscal agent for this program.

Relationship to Current Organizational Budget

This program accelerates permanent protection of permanent buffers for wildlife and water quality. This opportunity would not occur without support from the Outdoor Heritage Fund (& builds upon the activities of the Clean Water Fund).

Sustainability and Maintenance

All easements secured under this project will be permanent in nature. Under the terms of the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easement program, landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement and manage the conservation cover. A conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of the easement. Initial costs to establish conservation cover are covered under this project as part of the easement with additional assistance from USDA-CRP program. These additional buffer easements will be managed along with the other 5,000 conservation easements within the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). Currently BWSR and Soil and Water Conservation Districts have a process for easement stewardship to provide tracking, quality assurance, and compliance. Easements are reviewed in the field annually for each of the first 5 years and then every 3rd year after that. Stewardship costs are \$2400/easement. It is estimated that this project will result in 75 easements. The total stewardship costs of \$180,000 would be equally split with CWF for a LSOHC cost of \$90,000.

Outcomes

The permanent protection and restoration of 400 acres of grassland in the prairie region of Minnesota will produce significant wildlife benefits while also producing water quality benefits. Priority will be on enhancing and connecting past investments in public lands as well as shallow lakes to develop more sustainable systems and increase productivity of our lakes and habitats. The benefits of adding grassland buffers with 200' widths will increase wildlife production and provide benefits to the suite of grassland birds as well as game birds like mallards, blue-winged teal and ring-necked pheasants.

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Milestone	Date
Obtain applications for enrollment from eligible landowners	Conduct competitive enrollment period	Before June 30, 2012
Score proposals and bring project list before LSOHC	Obtain easement project list approval from LSOHC	Summer 2012
Easement development and recording	400 ac. of max habitat buffers enrolled	Ongoing after approval in 2012

Attachments (*on spreadsheet workbook – 3 separate tabs*):

- A. Budget
- B. Proposed Outcome Tables
- C. Parcel List

Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet

Name of Proposal:	MN Buffers for Water and Wildlife II
Legislative Citation:	
Date:	10/24/2011

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

Total Amount of Request \$ 2,090,000 *From page 1 on the funding form.*

Personnel

Position breakdown here	FTE	Over # of years	Anticipated Cash		Cash Leverage Source	Total
			LSOHC Request	Leverage		
<i>Manager of Programs</i>	0.125	3	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	<i>Clean Water Fund</i>	\$ 90,000
<i>Easement/Data Base/GIS</i>	0.5	3	\$ 96,750	\$ 96,750	<i>Clean Water Fund</i>	\$ 193,500
<i>Eco Services</i>	0.125	3	\$ 37,500	\$ 37,500	<i>Clean Water Fund</i>	\$ 75,000
<i>Project Manager</i>	0.125	3	\$ 37,500	\$ 37,500	<i>Clean Water Fund</i>	\$ 75,000
Total	0.88		\$ 216,750	\$ 216,750	\$ -	\$ 433,500

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	Anticipated Cash		Cash Leverage Source	Total
	LSOHC Request	Leverage		
Personnel - auto entered from above	\$ 216,750	\$ 216,750	\$ -	\$ 433,500
Contracts	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	<i>Clean Water Fund</i>	\$ 150,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT (breakout in table 7)				\$ -
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT (breakout in table 7)				\$ -
Easement Acquisition	\$ 1,708,250	\$ 1,708,250	<i>Clean Water Fund</i>	\$ 3,416,500
Easement Stewardship	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000	<i>Clean Water Fund</i>	\$ 180,000
Travel (in-state)				\$ -
Professional Services				\$ -
Direct Support Services				\$ -
DNR Land Acquisition Costs				\$ -
Other				\$ -
Capital Equipment (<i>auto entered from below</i>)				\$ -
Other Equipment/Tools				\$ -
Supplies/Materials				\$ -
	\$ 2,090,000	\$ 2,090,000	\$ -	\$ 4,180,000

Capital Equipment *(single items over \$10,000 - auto entered into table above)*

Item Name	LSOHC Request	Leverage
<i>Item 2 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 3 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 4 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 5 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 6 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 7 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 8 enter here</i>		
Total	-	-

Attachment B. Output Tables

Name of Proposal:	MN Buffers for Water and Wildlife II
Legislative Citation:	
Date:	10/24/2011

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
Protect Fee					0
Protect Easement		400			400
Protect Other					0
Enhance					0
Total	0	400	0	0	0

Total Acres (sum of Total column)
Total Acres (sum of Total row)

400
400

These two cells should be the same figure.

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore					\$ -
Protect Fee					\$ -
Protect Easement		\$ 2,090,000			\$ 2,090,000
Protect Other					\$ -
Enhance					\$ -
Total	\$ -	\$ 2,090,000	\$ -	\$ -	-

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)
Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 2,090,000
\$ 2,090,000

These two cells should 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						0
Protect Fee						0
Protect Easement				400		400
Protect Other						0
Enhance						0
Total	0	0	0	400	0	0

Total Acres (sum of Total column)
Total Acres (sum of Total row)
Total Acres from Table 1.

400
400
400

These three cells should be the same figure.

Attachment B. Output Tables

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore						\$ -
Protect Fee						
Protect Easement				\$ 2,090,000		
Protect Other						\$ -
Enhance						\$ -
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,090,000	\$ -	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column) \$ -
 Total Dollars (sum of Total row) \$ 2,090,000
 Check to make sure these amounts are the same as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

These two cells should be the same figure.

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

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					0
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability					0
Permanent Easement PILT Liability <i>NO State</i>		400			400
	0	400	0	0	

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

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total	
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability					\$ -	\$ -
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability					\$ -	\$ -
Permanent Easement PILT Liability <i>NO State</i>		\$ 1,708,250			\$ 1,708,250	\$ 3,416,500
	\$ -	\$ 1,708,250	\$ -	\$ -		

FYI: should match total in budget table that is auto entered below

Attachment C. Parcel List

MN Buffers for Water and Wildlife II

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Name of Proposal:
 Legislative Citation:
 Date:

County	Township (25-258)	Range (01-51)	Direction most parcels are 2 with the exception of some areas of Cook County which is 1	Section (01 thru 36)	TRDS	# of acres	Budgetary Estimate <small>(includes administrative, restoration or other related costs and do not include matching money contributed or earned by the transaction)</small>	Description	Activity PF=Protect Fee PE=Protect Easement PO=Protect Other R=Restore E=Enhance	If Easement, what is the easement cost as a % of the fee acquisition?	Any existing protection? (yes/no)	Open to hunting and fishing? (yes/no)

Parcel Name

Parcel list provided after sign-up

Information provided will be used to map project locations. Incomplete or inaccurate information will result in that parcel or program not being mapped.