

## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

### Laws of Minnesota 2012 Accomplishment Plan

**Date:** 24 Oct 11

**Program Title:** Enhanced Public Land - Grasslands

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Title: Grant Manager

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**Funds Recommended:** \$ 1,320,000

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

#### **Abstract:**

This project will use a combination of invasive tree removal, grazing, seeding, and fire, to improve habitat quality, diversity, and productivity on public lands in Minnesota.

### **Program Narrative**

#### **Design and Scope of Work**

Greater than 95% of Minnesota's prairies have been lost to the plow and development. Many of the remaining acres of native and restored grasslands have been degraded from lack of fire and the spread of invasive trees. Many of these acres have low plant diversity from 1) lack of grazing, a natural and fundamental process in grasslands, or 2) when the grasslands were restored a low diversity or grass only seed mix was used.

Research from across the tallgrass prairie region has shown that trees are almost always detrimental to prairie/grassland wildlife, for several reasons. Tree branches provide perches for hawks, owls, crows, and magpies, while the bases of the trees provide dens for foxes, raccoons, skunks, all of which can prey on eggs or nesting hens.

Carefully managed grazing for conservation almost always increases plant diversity. Several SGCN bird species in the state prefer grazed to ungrazed grasslands. The increase in plant diversity increases invertebrate abundance, providing a food base for grassland birds, while the increase in structural diversity among the plants increases habitat diversity and therefore abundance of many species of

grassland birds. Several candidate species for state or federal listing as endangered are dependent on moderate grazing.

Along with grazing, fire is the primary management tool for managing grassland habitat for waterfowl, gamebirds, and songbirds. This project will increase capabilities of DNR and USFWS to conduct prescribed fires on public lands, including DNR Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA).

Many public hunting areas were purchased as brome fields or were restored using low diversity seed mixes, often only grasses. At these sites, we will overseed into the ash after a fire with a diverse native seed mix.

Each year woody vegetation and invasive species increase on our public hunting lands. Every year we delay management action, the problem becomes larger and the cost increases. The duration of the benefits of this program is ongoing. The goal of this program is to get all WPAs and WMAs into a state where we no longer need mechanical or chemical treatments and high quality habitat can be sustained with maintenance burns.

We have developed an RFP process to solicit enhancement projects for lands open to public hunting lands owned and managed by the DNR and USFWS. MPCS and PF board members, along with staff from these agencies will review and prioritize the projects.

Based on previous projects conducted on DNR and USFWS lands, we anticipate costs as below. The exact acreage and ratios of dollars spent on each category each year will vary depending on proposals.

Prescribed Fire – \$3500/burn  
Invasive Tree Removal –\$1200/acre  
Conservation Grazing – \$0.80/foot of fencing  
Diversity Seeding – \$250/acre

## Planning

This project addresses the following conservation plans:

*Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare* – This plan lists prairie chickens as well as at least twenty-six other bird, invertebrate, and plant species as SGCN. This project will enhance the habitat quality for all these species.

*Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan* – This project addresses several recommendations. Under Habitat Recommendations, we address 1) protect priority land habitats, 3) improve connectivity, 5) restore land, wetland, and wetland-associated watersheds, 9) overall research on land and aquatic habitats, and 13) habitat and landscape conservation and training programs for all citizens. Our work directly addresses the Management Option to Support Prairie SGCN species, “prevent the invasion of grassland by trees and shrubs”.

*Partners in Flight* – This project will improve habitat for all nine of the grassland obligate species in the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Plan (Physiographic Area 40)

*Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Plan* – This project will increase habitat quality for at least seventeen species in Bird Conservation Region 11.

*Grassland Bird Conservation Areas (GBCA)* – This project will improve the habitat quality for all grassland species within these areas.

National Audubon Society 20 Common Birds in Decline – Seven of the twenty birds on this list will benefit from this project.

Ecological Section Vision and Priorities – The project will improve condition of habitats on public lands and restore and enhance upland habitat (priority #1), increase wildlife productivity (#4), and restore and enhance habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species (#7). We will accomplish this by using multiple tools to enhance grassland habitats increasing the quality, diversity, and productivity of our public land grasslands.

#### **Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds**

There is no direct connection to other constitutional funds as this is an acceleration project to achieve higher quality grassland habitat on our public lands in the prairie area of the state.

#### **Relationship to Current Organizational Budget**

MPCS and PF do not have specific, existing budgets for enhancing of critical prairie chicken habitat within the prairie chicken range of Minnesota. This proposal is the start of a new partnership between the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society, Pheasants Forever, USFWS, and MN DNR focused on managing grassland habitat for gamebirds, waterfowl, and all other species of grassland wildlife.

#### **Sustainability and Maintenance**

The goal is to accelerate grassland habitat enhancements on our public lands in the prairie region of Minnesota so that we can ensure the long-term productivity and sustainability of wildlife populations.

#### **Outcomes**

The immediate results will be measured in acres of trees removed, acres reseeded, acres fenced for grazing, and acres burned. The goals of these actions are to improve habitat for grassland game and other wildlife and ultimately increase grassland wildlife productivity. The results of this proposal specifically address several items in the results management framework including 1) improved habitat conditions on public lands, 2) enhanced upland habitat, increased wildlife productivity, 3) enhanced habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species, and ultimately 4) healthy, resilient ecosystems that provide habitat for migratory waterfowl and other grassland species.

#### **Accomplishment Timeline**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Date</b>
Distribute RFP to agency offices	Proposals Received	Fall 2012
Present selected projects to LSOHC	Develop final list of projects	Winter 2012-13
Enhancement Work Begins	Award proposals (75)	Winter 2012-13
Enhancement Completed	Completed Projects (75)	June 30, 2015

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

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

**Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet**

Name of Proposal:

Enhanced Public Land Grasslands

Date:

7/15/2011 (modified and submitted 24 Oct 11)

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

**Total Amount of Request**      \$      1,320,000 *From page 1 on the funding form.*

**Personnel**

Position breakdown here	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash		Total
				Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	
<i>PF Director of Conservation</i>	0.05		\$ 20,000		\$	20,000
<i>PF Regional Staff (2)</i>	0.15		\$ 50,000		\$	50,000
<i>PF Grants Staff</i>	0.15		\$ 30,000		\$	30,000
					\$	-
					\$	-
					\$	-
					\$	-
<b>Total</b>	0.35		\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,000

**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		Total
		Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	
Personnel - <i>auto entered from above</i>	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,000
Contracts	\$ 1,220,000			\$ 1,220,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT <i>(breakout in table 7)</i>				\$ -
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT <i>(breakout in table 7)</i>				\$ -
Easement Acquisition				\$ -
Easement Stewardship				\$ -
Travel (in-state)				\$ -
Professional Services				\$ -
Direct Support Services				\$ -
DNR Land Acquisition Costs <i>(\$3,500 per acquisition)</i>				\$ -
Other				\$ -
Capital Equipment <i>(auto entered from below)</i>	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -
Other Equipment/Tools				\$ -
Supplies/Materials				\$ -
	\$ 1,320,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,320,000

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

Item Name	LSOHC Request	Leverage
<b>Total</b>	-	-

## Attachment B. Output Tables

<b>Name of Proposal:</b>	Enhanced Public Land Grasslands
<b>Date:</b>	15-Jul-11

*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					0
Protect Other					0
Enhance		18500			18500
<b>Total</b>	0	18500	0	0	0

Total Acres (sum of Total column)

18500

*These two cells should be the same figure.*

Total Acres (sum of Total row)

18500

### Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore					\$ -
Protect Fee					\$ -
Protect Easement					\$ -
Protect Other					\$ -
Enhance		\$ 1,320,000			\$ 1,320,000
<b>Total</b>	\$ -	\$ 1,320,000	\$ -	\$ -	-

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)

\$ 1,320,000

*These two cells should be the same figure.*

Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 1,320,000

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						0
Protect Other						0
Enhance				18500		18500
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	18500	0	0

Total Acres (sum of Total column)

18500

*These three cells should be the same figure.*

Total Acres (sum of Total row)

18500

Total Acres from Table 1.

18500

**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						\$ -
Protect Other						\$ -
Enhance				\$ 1,320,000		\$ 1,320,000
<b>Total</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,320,000	\$ -	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)      \$ 1,320,000 *These two cells should be the same figure.*  
 Total Dollars (sum of Total row)      \$ 1,320,000  
 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**

# 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 <i>NO State PILT Liability</i>					0
	0	0	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 <i>NO State PILT Liability</i>					\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		

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

**Attachment C. Parcel List**

**Name of Proposal:**

Enhanced Public Land Grasslands

**Date:**

15-Jul-11

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 (includes administrative, restoration or other related costs and do not include matching money contributed or earned by the transaction)	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)
<b>Parcel Name</b>												
Parcel list provided after RFP												

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

# Enhanced Public Lands – Grasslands Proposal Worksheet

WMA/WPA Name \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Request \_\_\_\_\_ Township \_\_\_\_\_ Range \_\_\_\_\_ Section(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Individual making request \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of requestor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Public Land Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of manager \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Work (circle one)

**Prescribed fire**

**Undesirable Tree Removal**

**Diversity Seeding**

**Conservation Grazing**

Does project meet criteria A – F listed on scoring sheet? YES / NO

Provide a short narrative of the project. Provide details of what will be done and the wildlife benefits of the project.

What species (game and non-game) will benefit from this work?

Will any T&E species or SGCN be negatively impacted by this work? Y / N If so, which species?

Attachments Needed:

Please attach a detailed site map (aerial photo) of the WMA or WPA, describing exactly where the work will be done within the site. Also provide a landscape map of all protected areas and other features of interest.

Provide a budget estimate for the project and attach spreadsheet.



# DRAFT

## Enhanced Public Lands - Grasslands

WMA/WPA Project Name:	County:	Township/Range/Section:	Date:
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Type of Project
<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Removal <input type="checkbox"/> Prescribed Fire <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity Seeding <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Grazing

**Project must meet these minimum criteria to be eligible:**

- A. Project is located within the focus areas identified on map.
- B. Project will occur on existing Wildlife Management Area or Waterfowl Production Area.
- C. Project is approved by appropriate public land manager.
- D. Project is open to public hunting.
- E. This accelerates public land habitat enhancement, the project would not be completed without this funding
- F. Project can be completed by private contractor.

Factors	Possible Points	Score
1 <input type="checkbox"/> Will this project benefit pheasants or prairie chickens?	0 or 20 pts.	
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Will project benefit any T&E or SGCN species?	0 or 10 pts.	
3    How large is contiguous public/protected private lands habitat complex?		
<input type="checkbox"/> > 240 acres	25 pts.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 81 acres - 240 acres	15 pts.	
<input type="checkbox"/> < 80 acres	5 pts.	
4    Will project help reduce future management costs?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	10 pts.	
<input type="checkbox"/> No	0 pts.	
5    Vegetative Diversity		
<input type="checkbox"/> > 20 Native species exist or planted	20 pts.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 11 - 19 Native species exist or planted	10 pts.	
<input type="checkbox"/> < 10 species exist or planted	0 pts.	
6    Project Type		
<input type="checkbox"/> Removal of Undesirable/Invasive Woody Vegetation	15 pts.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity Seeding, grassland conversion	10 pts.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Prescribed Fire / Conservation Grazing	5 pts.	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0 to 100 pts.</b>	