

## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

### Laws of Minnesota 2012 Accomplishment Plan

**Date: October 24, 2011**

**Program Title: Protect (Acquire) Key Forest Habitat Lands – Cass County**

Manager's Name: Joshua Stevenson

Title: Land Commissioner

Organization: Cass County

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**Funds Recommended: \$480,000**

**Legislative Citation: ML 2012, Ch. X, Art. X, Sec. X, Subd. 3 (d):** *(to be completed when signed by Governor)*

#### **Abstract:**

Project will protect forest wildlife habitat in central Minnesota through fee title acquisition of key forest tracts. Title of lands acquired will be held by Cass County in Fee.

#### **Program Narrative**

##### **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 will lead 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 has resulted in the loss of Jack Pine barrens and forested lakeshore in the landscape of southern Cass County. Forest tracts currently undeveloped, held by 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 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 are not being pursued for convenience of management.

The identified parcels play a key role in future management plans of the Jack Pine Barrens and Forest Lakeshore 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 will provide 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 meets the requirements of both plans and will require stakeholder input as part of the project. The local units of government with the lands to be purchased will be contacted for input before any acquisitions are made. Recent purchases of this nature have been 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 are 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 will be open to the public for fishing and the taking of game.

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

The Cass County Land Department has used funds from the LCCMR for this type of activity in the past. Property acquisitions using LCCMR were very successful. With new changes to the use of that fund, it seems that our proposal is most likely to be funded from the LSOHC.

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

The total value of this project is almost 50% of our annual budget. The entire amount received will be used for acquisition. The amount of money available to the Cass County Land Department for acquisition in the past is directly related to land sale revenue. Land Sales revenue has been down recently and funds to LCCMR are still outstanding pending the sale of land currently available over the counter. Our current staff will use this money to acquire lands in fee following existing procedures. Because our activity in land purchases and sales is currently low due to the depressed land sale market, there will be little or no effect on current duties.

### **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 will be 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 will be 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

The outcomes desired for this project include the protection of shoreland by maintaining forest covertype, prevention of parcelization and forest fragmentation, and access to landlocked public property. The project will also protect habitat in areas with rare threatened and endangered species. It will also provide forest-based wildlife habitat management by incorporating acquired lands under our existing Forest Resource Management Plan. Users will see an increase in options to access existing public lands.

### Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Milestone	Date completed
<i>Meet with LUG's and prepare purchase agreements</i>	Local Unit of Government Support and Transparency	Jan-Feb 2013
<i>Contract for appraisals and Acquire Lands in Fee</i>	Use existing staff and contract for services	March – June 2013
<i>Record Deeds</i>	Achieve “no net loss” of public land by adding to current land base	July - 2013

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

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

*No Map is needed for the accomplishment plan*

**Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet**

<b>Name of Proposal:</b>	Protect (Acquire) Key Forest Habitat Lands - Cass County
<b>Legislative Citation:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	10/24/2011

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

**Total Amount of Request**     \$ 480,000 *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>Resource Manager</i>	0.25		\$	18,500	<i>Cass County</i>	\$ 18,500
<i>Land Commissioner</i>	0.25		\$	18,500	<i>Cass County</i>	\$ 18,500
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.5</b>		\$ -	\$ 37,000	\$ -	\$ 37,000

**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	
<b>Personnel - auto entered from above</b>	\$ -	\$ 37,000	\$ -	\$ 37,000
<b>Contracts</b>				\$ -
<b>Fee Acquisition w/ PILT (breakout in table 7)</b>				\$ -
<b>Fee Acquisition w/o PILT (breakout in table 7)</b>	\$ 480,000			\$ 480,000
<b>Easement Acquisition</b>				\$ -
<b>Easement Stewardship</b>				\$ -
<b>Travel (in-state)</b>				\$ -
<b>Professional Services</b>		\$ 2,000	<i>Cass County</i>	\$ 2,000
<b>Direct Support Services</b>				\$ -
<b>DNR Land Acquisition Costs</b>				\$ -
<b>Other</b>				\$ -
<i>Capital Equipment (auto entered from below)</i>				\$ -
<i>Other Equipment/Tools</i>				\$ -
<i>Supplies/Materials</i>				\$ -
	\$ 480,000	\$ 39,000	\$ -	\$ 519,000

**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>	Protect (Acquire) Key Forest Habitat Lands - Cass County
<b>Legislative Citation:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	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			254.62		254.62
Protect Easement					0
Protect Other					0
Enhance					0
<b>Total</b>	0	0	254.62	0	

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

254.62  
254.62

*These two cells should be the same figure.*

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

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore					\$ -
Protect Fee			\$ 480,000		\$ 480,000
Protect Easement					\$ -
Protect Other					\$ -
Enhance					\$ -
<b>Total</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 480,000	\$ -	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)  
Total Dollars (sum of Total row)  
Check to make sure this amount is the same as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

\$ 480,000  
\$ 480,000

*These two cells should be the same figure.*

**Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section**

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore						0
Protect Fee					254.62	254.62
Protect Easement						0
Protect Other						0
Enhance						0
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	0	254.62	

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

254.62  
254.62  
254.62

*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					\$ 480,000	\$ 480,000
Protect Easement						
Protect Other						\$ -
Enhance						\$ -
<b>Total</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 480,000	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)      \$ 480,000 *These two cells should be the same figure.*  
 Total Dollars (sum of Total row)      \$ 480,000  
 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			254.62		254.62
Permanent Easement PILT Liability <i>NO State</i>					0
	0	0	254.62	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			\$ 480,000		\$ 480,000	\$ 480,000
Permanent Easement PILT Liability <i>NO State</i>						
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 480,000	\$ -		

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

### Attachment C. Parcel List

**Name of Proposal:** Protect (Acquire) Key Forest Habitat Lands - Cass County  
**Legislative Citation:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** 10/24/2011

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>												
Homebrook Parcel	Cass	135	30	2	6	1353006	48.92	\$109,700.00	Gov't Lot 6	PF	N	Y
McKinley Parcel	Cass	138	32	2	10	1383210	40.76	\$30,500.00	SW of SW	PF	N	Y
Wilson Parcel	Cass	137	29	2	19	1372919	40.17	\$62,900.00	SW of SE	PF	N	Y
Island Lake Parcel	Cass	139	30	2	18	1393018	40.62	\$55,800.00	SE NW	PF	N	Y
Woodrow Parcel	Cass	140	29	2	33	1402933	64	\$190,000.00	Unplatted Por of Gov Lot 1, Pt of Gov L	PF	N	Y
Deerfield Parcel	Cass	139	31	2	1	1393101	20.15	\$29,100.00	5% of SE of NE	PF	N	Y

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