

**Main Request for Funding Form**

**Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
Fiscal Year 2013**

**Program or Project Title: Minnesota Buffers for Water and Wildlife - II  
Funds Requested: \$ 5,000,000**

**Manager's Name: MN Farm Bill Assistance Partnership, Matt Holland & Tabor Hoek**

**Organization: Pheasants Forever, DNR & BWSR**

**Street Address: 679 West River Drive**

**City New London State: MN Zip: 56273**

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**Organization Web Site: www.pheasantsforever.org**

**County Location: Prairie Section**

**Ecological Planning Regions:**

Northern Forest       Forest/Prairie Transition       Southeast Forest

x Prairie       Metro/Urban

**Activity Type:**

Protect - Fee      x Protect - Easement       Protect - Other

x Restore  Enhance

**Priority Resources addressed by activity:**

Wetlands       Forests      x Prairie      x Habitat

**Project Abstract**

This program bridges the resource benefits of the Clean Water Fund and Outdoor Heritage Fund resulting in the protection of 1,000ac. of enhanced wildlife buffers in partnership with private landowners.

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**Project 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.

We propose that LSOHC fund \$5 million in perpetual state RIM buffer easements that are prioritized to build upon the 100' RIM buffers funded through the Clean Water Fund. The purpose is to enhance the wildlife benefits of the water quality practice being implemented while delivering a better option to private landowners in Minnesota. This program would bring two key components of the dedicated funding amendment that Minnesotans voted on in 2008 – clean water and wildlife. Where buffers are desired and clean water funds not available, 200 foot buffers would be placed by this program.

### **Planning**

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.

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 (1,000 acres) 2. Protect critical shorelands of streams and lakes (60-120 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 (1,000 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. This program balances the need for quality wildlife habitat (200 foot buffer), water quality (up to 100 foot buffer) and what works for farmers and landowners within their operation.

### **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 150 easements. The total stewardship costs of \$360,000 would be equally split with CWF for a LSOHC cost of \$180,000

## Outcomes

The permanent protection and restoration of 1,000 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.

## Activity Type Detail

### Fee Acquisition Projects

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition?

Yes                       No, please explain                      x not applicable

If no, please explain here:

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

x 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 held on privately owned land. Parcel size is expected to be very small in relation to public hunting lands. Landowner may have the option for enrollment in any applicable walk in access program.

Will the conservation easement be permanent?

x 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:

**Past Outdoor Heritage Fund Appropriations Received for this program**

ML 2009	ML 2010	ML 2011
\$	\$	\$2,249,000

**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	1000 ac. of max habitat buffers enrolled	Ongoing after approval in 2012

**Attachments:**

- A. Budget
- B. Proposed Output Tables 1-5
- C. Parcel List

**Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet**

<b>Name of Proposal:</b>	MN Buffers for Water and Wildlife II
<b>Date:</b>	7/15/2011

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

**Total Amount of Request**      \$ 5,000,000 *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>Program Management</i>	0.125	3	\$ 45,000		\$	45,000
<i>Easement/Data Base/GIS</i>	1	3	\$ 193,500		\$	193,500
<i>Eco Services</i>	0.125	3	\$ 37,500		\$	37,500
<i>Project Manager</i>	0.25	3	\$ 75,000		\$	75,000
<i>position 5</i>					\$	-
<i>position 6</i>					\$	-
<i>position 7</i>					\$	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.5</b>		<b>\$ 351,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 351,000</b>

**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>	\$ 351,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 351,000
<b>Contracts</b>	\$ 150,000			\$ 150,000
<b>Fee Acquisition w/ PILT (breakout in table 7)</b>				\$ -
<b>Fee Acquisition w/o PILT (breakout in table 7)</b>				\$ -
<b>Easement Acquisition</b>	\$ 4,319,000	\$ -		\$ 4,319,000
<b>Easement Stewardship</b>	\$ 180,000			\$ 180,000
<b>Travel (in-state)</b>				\$ -
<b>Professional Services</b>				\$ -
<b>Direct Support Services</b>				\$ -
<b>DNR Land Acquisition Costs (\$3,500 per acquisition)</b>				\$ -
<b>Other</b>				\$ -
Capital Equipment <i>(auto entered from below)</i>	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -
Other Equipment/Tools				\$ -
Supplies/Materials				\$ -
	<b>\$ 5,000,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 5,000,000</b>

**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>		
<b>Total</b>	-	-

## Attachment B. Output Tables

<b>Name of Proposal:</b>	MN Buffers for Water and Wildlife II
<b>Date:</b>	7/15/2011

*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		1000			1000
Protect Other					0
Enhance					0
<b>Total</b>	0	1000	0	0	0

Total Acres (sum of Total column)	1000	<i>These two cells should be the same figure.</i>
Total Acres (sum of Total row)	1000	

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

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore					\$ -
Protect Fee					\$ -
Protect Easement		\$ 5,000,000			\$ 5,000,000
Protect Other					\$ -
Enhance					\$ -
<b>Total</b>	\$ -	\$ 5,000,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)	\$ 5,000,000	<i>These two cells should be the same figure.</i>
Total Dollars (sum of Total row)	\$ 5,000,000	

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				1000		1000
Protect Other						0
Enhance						0
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	1000	0	0

Total Acres (sum of Total column)	1000	<i>These three cells should be the same figure.</i>
Total Acres (sum of Total row)	1000	
Total Acres from Table 1.	1000	

**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				\$ 5,000,000		\$ 5,000,000
Protect Other						\$ -
Enhance						\$ -
<b>Total</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000,000	\$ -	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)

\$ 5,000,000

*These two cells should be the same figure.*

Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 5,000,000

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>PILT Liability</i> <i>NO State</i>		1000			1000
	0	1000	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>PILT Liability</i> <i>NO State</i>		\$ 4,319,000			\$ 4,319,000	\$ 4,319,000
	\$ -	\$ 4,319,000	\$ -	\$ -		

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



### Attachment C. Parcel List

**Name of Proposal:** Minnesota Buffers for Water and Wildlife - II  
**Date:** 7/15/2011

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)
<p><b>Parcel Name</b> Parcel list provided after signup</p>												

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