

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

## Laws of Minnesota 2013 Final Report



**Date:** November 12, 2015

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

**Funds Recommended:** \$500,000

**Manager's Name:** Joshua Stevenson

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**Legislative Citation:** ML 2013, Ch. 137, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 3(d)

**Appropriation Language:** \$500,000 in the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Cass County to acquire land in fee in Cass County for forest wildlife habitat or to prevent forest fragmentation. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

**County Locations:** Cass

**Regions in which work will take place:**

- Northern Forest

**Activity types:**

- Protect in Fee

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Forest

### Abstract:

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

### Design and scope of work:

Central MN, especially areas in Cass County from Brainerd/Baxter to Walker, has and will continue to see some of the fastest human population growth in MN. This growth has led to increased demands from use of this area, its natural resources and related public land base that need to support this growth. Development of these private industrial parcels has resulted in the loss of Jack Pine barrens in the landscape of southern Cass County. Industrial forest tracts held by Potlatch are currently being sold to private developers. These lands often provide access to existing public lands for resource management, are inholdings in otherwise unfragmented landscapes, create contiguous wildlife corridors, and protect larger blocks of land especially useful for stand level management of habitat.

Key industrial forest tracts (ie inholdings in large public land tracts, management access issues) are being considered or currently being offered for sale by a large industrial forest owner (Potlatch Corp) in this area. Depressed market conditions and a willingness by this industrial forest owner to sell at this time is an opportunity that should be addressed now since it is narrow and may close at any time. The strategy was to acquire land that completes existing 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 and conversion from forest to agricultural use. The acquired lands were not being pursued for convenience of management.

The acquired parcels play a key role in future management plans of the Jack Pine Barrens including the role of fire as a management tool. The loss of these parcels to private ownership would have resulted in lost access and possibly loss of forest land. Management of adjacent public lands would have been limited to frozen ground conditions. This would have eliminated management tools such as site preparation of 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 provided 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 land of this nature whenever possible to protect our management access. The Cass County Comprehensive plan requires no new loss of acres of public land and local unit of government input on all purchases and land sales. This project met the requirements of both plans and required stakeholders input as part of the project. The local units of government with private industrial lands to be purchased have provided written consent for the purchase of each parcel. All purchases in this project are supported by both the County and local units of government.

### Which LSOHC state-wide priorities are addressed in this proposal:

- Address conservation opportunities that will be lost if not immediately acted on
- Address wildlife species of greatest conservation need, Minnesota County Biological Survey data, and rare, threatened and endangered species inventories in land and water decisions, as well as permanent solutions to aquatic invasive species
- Allow public access. This comes into play when all other things about the request are approximately equal
- Are able to leverage effort and/or other funds to supplement any OHF appropriation
- Are ongoing, successful, transparent and accountable programs addressing actions and targets of one or more of the ecological sections
- Ensures activities for "protecting, restoring and enhancing" are coordinated among agencies, non profits and others while doing this important work
- Produce multiple enduring conservation benefits
- Provide Minnesotans with greater public access to outdoor environments with hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities
- Target unique Minnesota landscapes that have historical value to fish and wildlife
- Use a science-based strategic planning and evaluation model to guide protection, restoration and enhancement, similar to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Strategic Habitat Conservation model

### Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

#### Northern Forest:

- Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas
- Protect forestland through acquisition or easement to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties

### Relationship to other funds:

- Not Listed

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.

### How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended:

The Cass County Land Department manages all County Administered lands under our Forest Resource Management 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.

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.

## Outcomes:

### Programs in the northern forest region:

- Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation
- Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species
- Increased availability and improved condition of riparian forests and other habitat corridors
- Landlocked public properties have increased access for land managers

### How will they be measured and evaluated?

We measure forest habitat protection by acres of land purchased, acres of existing public land made accessible, miles of waterfront habitat protected, and miles of property line eliminated. This project has provided permanent protection to over 221 acres of forest habitat land, year round forest management access to an existing 240 acres, protected .6115 miles of lakeshore habitat, and eliminated 2.25 miles of public property line. The project also provided habitat corridors for numerous endangered and threatened species including Northern Long Eared Bat, Blanding's Turtle, and the Gold Winged Warbler.

# Budget Spreadsheet

*Final Budget line item reallocations are allowed up to 10% and do not need require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan*

Total Amount: \$500,000

## Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	Request	Spent	Cash Leverage (anticipated)	Cash Leverage (received)	Leverage Source	Total (original)	Total (final)
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$37,000	\$37,000	Cass County, Cass County	\$37,000	\$37,000
Contracts	\$0	\$0	\$8,000	\$0	Cass County	\$8,000	\$0
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$0	\$0		\$500,000	\$500,000
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Professional Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Total	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$45,000	\$37,000		\$545,000	\$537,000

## Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	Spent	Cash Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Resource Manager	0.25	0.00	\$0	\$18,500	Cass County	\$18,500
Land	0.25	0.00	\$0	\$18,500	Cass County	\$18,500
Total	0.50	0.00	\$0	\$37,000		\$37,000

# Output Tables

**Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type**

Type	Wetlands (original)	Wetlands (final)	Prairies (original)	Prairies (final)	Forest (original)	Forest (final)	Habitats (original)	Habitats (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	427	329	0	0	427	329
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	427	329	0	0	427	329

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

Type	Wetlands (original)	Wetlands (final)	Prairies (original)	Prairies (final)	Forest (original)	Forest (final)	Habitats (original)	Habitats (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000

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

Type	Metro Urban (original)	Metro Urban (final)	ForestPrairie (original)	Forest Prairie (final)	SE Forest (original)	SE Forest (final)	Prairie (original)	Prairie (final)	N Forest (original)	N Forest (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	427	329	427	329
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	427	329	427	329

**Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section**

Type	Metro Urban (original)	Metro Urban (final)	ForestPrairie (original)	Forest Prairie (final)	SE Forest (original)	SE Forest (final)	Prairie (original)	Prairie (final)	N Forest (original)	N Forest (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000

**Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles (original)**

**Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles (final)**

1505 feet

# Parcel List

## Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

## Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Cass

Name	TRDS	Acres	OHF Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?	Description
Bull Moose 112	13831229	112	\$182,000	No	Full	Full	NE of NW and NW of NE 29 SE of SW 20
Byron Potlatch Parcels	13532206	65	\$67,000	No	Full	Full	Part of NE
Deerfield Parcel	13931208	152	\$251,000	No	Full	Full	SE NE and SE

## Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

## Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

## Completed Parcel: Bull Moose 112

# of Total Acres:	112
County:	Cass
Township:	138
Range:	31
Direction:	2
Section:	29
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	
# of Acres: Forest:	112
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	
Amount of Shoreline:	
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	
Has there been signage erected at the site:	No - Signs will be erected pending a certificate of survey.
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	Cass County
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Joshua Stevenson
Annual Reporting Address:	PO Box 25
Annual Reporting City:	Backus
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	56435
Annual Reporting Email:	josh.stevenson@co.cass.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	218-947-7501
Purchase Date:	July 18, 2014
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$182,000
Appraised Value:	\$182,000
Professional Service Costs:	\$2,400
Assessed Value:	\$123,600
Total Project Cost:	\$182,000
Fees Received:	\$0
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	Other (Explain) -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Cass County



## Completed Parcel: Byron Potlatch Parcels

# of Total Acres:	65
County:	Cass
Township:	135
Range:	32
Direction:	2
Section:	06
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	
# of Acres: Forest:	64.68
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	
Amount of Shoreline:	
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	
Has there been signage erected at the site:	No - Signs will be erected pending a certificate of survey.
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	Cass County
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Joshua Stevenson
Annual Reporting Address:	PO Box 25
Annual Reporting City:	Backus
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	56435
Annual Reporting Email:	josh.stevenson@co.cass.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	218-947-7501
Purchase Date:	June 23, 2015
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$67,000
Appraised Value:	\$87,400
Professional Service Costs:	\$2,600
Assessed Value:	\$76,600
Total Project Cost:	\$67,000
Fees Received:	\$0
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	Other (Explain) -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Cass County

## Completed Parcel: Deerfield Parcel

# of Total Acres:	152
County:	Cass
Township:	139
Range:	31
Direction:	2
Section:	08
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	
# of Acres: Forest:	152
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	
Amount of Shoreline:	1505 (Linear Feet)
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	
Has there been signage erected at the site:	No - Signs will be erected pending a certificate of survey.
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	Cass County
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Joshua Stevenson
Annual Reporting Address:	PO Box 25
Annual Reporting City:	Backus
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	56435
Annual Reporting Email:	josh.stevenson@co.cass.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	218-947-7501
Purchase Date:	July 10, 2014
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$251,000
Appraised Value:	\$338,000
Professional Service Costs:	\$2,000
Assessed Value:	\$235,000
Total Project Cost:	\$251,000
Fees Received:	\$0
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	Other (Explain) -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Cass County

# Parcel Map

## Protect (Acquire) Key Forest Habitat Lands Cass County

