

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Laws of Minnesota 2013 Accomplishment Plan

Date: October 16, 2012

Program or Project Title: DNR Wildlife Management Area, Scientific and Natural Area and Native Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

Funds Recommended: \$4,940,000

Manager's Name: Patrick Rivers

Title: Fish and Wildlife Acquisition Consultant

Organization: MN Dept. of Natural Resources

Street Address: 500 Lafayette Road

City: St. Paul, MN 55155

Telephone: 651-259-5209

E-Mail: pat.rivers@state.mn.us

Organization Web Site: www.mndnr.gov

Legislative Citation: (to be completed when signed by Governor)

County Locations: Anoka, Becker, Big Stone, Clay, Dakota, Douglas, Houston, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Le Sueur, Marshall, Martin, Murray, Norman, Olmsted, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Stearns, Wadena, Winona, and Wright.

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Northern Forest
- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Southeast Forest
- Prairie
- Metro / Urban

Activity Type:

- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Wetlands
- Forest
- Prairie
- Habitat

Abstract:

Our program will coordinate with partners, with emphasis on Prairie Conservation

Plan implementation, and acquire priority lands for Wildlife Management Areas, Scientific and Natural Areas, and Native Prairie Bank easements for public hunting, trapping and compatible outdoor uses consistent with the Outdoor Recreation Act.

Activity Detail

Design and Scope of Work:

Minnesota's population has grown by over 1 million people, to 5.3 million, in the past 20 years and is projected to continue this growth rate for the next 20 years. Thousands of acres of habitat are being converted to intensive commercial, residential, and agricultural development each year. Due to the current recession, non-agricultural land prices have stabilized or declined and a short-term opportunity exists to purchase more value for our expenditures. At the same time in our prairie landscape, land prices have risen in recent years due to the favorable economic conditions for row crop agriculture.

Lands acquired in fee will become part of the Outdoor Recreation System (M.S. 86A.06) as WMAs or SNAs, or as permanent conservation easement as part of the Native Prairie Bank (NPB) (M.S. 84.96). This project includes the initial land development of each parcel acquired including boundary surveys and signage, well and septic closure, building and dump disposal, restoration of shallow temporary and seasonal wetlands and restoration of bare ground with native vegetation; the project also includes proposed NPB conservation easement stewardship funding. We would like to clarify that costs for new acquisitions include minimal public use facilities to prevent WMA and SNA habitat degradation. This program is supported by all traditional outdoor stakeholders.

Wildlife Management Areas

This proposal will protect 1,488 acres of wildlife habitat through acquisition and development as State Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Lands will be acquired and developed within each Ecological Planning Region following general guidelines from the 2002 Citizens' Advisory Committee on WMA acquisition and the 2014 LSOHC Call for Funding Request.

WMAs are established to protect those lands and waters which have a high potential for wildlife production and to develop and manage these lands and waters for the production of wildlife, for public hunting, fishing and trapping, and for other compatible outdoor recreational uses. While highly successful, the current WMA system does not meet all of the present and future needs for wildlife habitat, wildlife population management, hunter access and wildlife related recreation.

DNR Section of Wildlife uses a geospatial analytical (GIS) based tool to identify the highest priority tracts for potential WMA acquisitions. This approach uses a quantitative or data based approach to score and rank acquisition proposals based on a set of weighted criteria and creates a standardized method for evaluating proposed acquisitions on a statewide level. Criteria and weights are annually reviewed and adapted to changing conditions and priorities. This ensures that funds are used to acquire available lands consistent with the statutory purpose of WMAs.

The WMA acquisition program is guided by the 2002 Citizens' Committee report. This committee was composed of a diverse group of eleven major stakeholder groups. A list of potential acquisition opportunities from willing sellers is coordinated with interested stakeholders and partners to eliminate duplication and identify concerns or support. All WMA acquisitions by DNR require county board approval.

To date, LSOHC funds have paid for 1,421 acres of WMA (3,820 acres including partner-acquired), with several acquisitions nearing completion that will add to this total. Coordinating with partners has been successful to ensure we are working cooperatively and on priority parcels. Two of the biggest challenges are rising agricultural land values and meeting landowner expectations.

Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs)

Sites of biodiversity significance with high game and non-game wildlife habitat value will be acquired by fee acquisition and designated as state SNAs within the state recreation system and would all be open to all hunting during the regular seasons. To be acquired and designated as SNA, the site must be recommended for SNA designation in an Ecological Evaluation report and part of a Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) outstanding or high biodiversity significance site and/or be a geological feature of statewide significance. All sites designated as SNA are predominantly native plant communities and also contain habitat for rare species and Species of Greatest Conservation Need. All sites acquired as SNA require county board approval. This proposal will protect 120 acres of very high quality prairie as SNAs-bluff (goat) prairie in the SE Forest ecological section and

native prairie in the Prairie Plan's Core Area of northwestern Minnesota's glacial Lake Aggasiz ridge.

Native Prairie Bank Conservation Easement (NPB)

DNR-held and managed NPB Conservation Easements (NPB) will be acquired on high quality native prairie in the prairie, southeastern and south-central Minnesota. Generally, NPB acquisitions are at least 90% native prairie (unless the landowner donates additional non-prairie lands). Each potential NPB site is prioritized based upon: (1) size, quality and diversity of the native prairie, (2) occurrence of or suitable habitat for rare species, (3) location of the tract in relation to other protected prairie, (4) potential for long-term habitat management and enhancement of the site, (5) landowner interest in maintaining the prairie, and (6) additional factors such as jeopardy to tract. This proposal will protect 460 acres as NPBs. Targeted locations include bluff prairies (also called goat prairies) along the Root River and several western Minnesota native prairies within the Prairie Plan Core Areas.

Planning

Strategic habitat conservation is defined as an iterative process of developing and refining a conservation strategy, making efficient management decisions, and using research and monitoring to assess accomplishments and inform future iterations of the conservation strategy. The priority setting process for acquiring and protecting state lands described above meets this definition.

Planning

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation
- H7 Keep water on the landscape

Plans Addressed:

- A Vision for Wildlife and Its Use -- Goals and Outcomes 2006-2012
- Ducks Unlimited Living Lakes Initiative
- Long Range Duck Recovery Plan
- Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN
- Managing Minnesota's Shallow Lakes for Waterfowl and Wildlife
- Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Plans
- Minnesota DNR Scientific and Natural Area's Long Range Plan
- Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda
- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan
- Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years
- North American Waterfowl Management Plan
- Northern Plains Prairie Potholes Regional Shorebird Conservation Plan
- State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Strategic Habitat Conservation Model
- U.S. Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Plan

LSOHC Statewide Priorities:

- Are ongoing, successful, transparent and accountable programs addressing actions and targets of one or more of the ecological sections
- Produce multiple enduring conservation benefits
- Are able to leverage effort and/or other funds to supplement any OHF

appropriation

- Allow public access. This comes into play when all other things about the request are approximately equal
- Address conservation opportunities that will be lost if not immediately acted on
- 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
- 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
- Provide Minnesotans with greater public access to outdoor environments with hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities
- Ensures activities for "protecting, restoring and enhancing" are coordinated among agencies, non profits and others while doing this important work
- Target unique Minnesota landscapes that have historical value to fish and wildlife

LSOHC Prairie Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes
- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna
- Convert agricultural land to wetland/upland to protect, enhance, or restore existing habitat complexes, such as WMAs
- Protect, restore, and enhance shallow lakes
- Protect expiring CRP lands
- Protect, enhance, and restore migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase migratory and breeding success

LSOHC Forest Prairie Transition Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife
- Protect, enhance, and restore rare native remnant prairie
- Protect, enhance, and restore migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase migratory and breeding success

LSOHC Northern Forest Section Priorities:

- 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

LSOHC Metro Urban Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and

- oak savanna with an emphasis on areas with high biological diversity
- Protect, enhance, and restore riparian and littoral habitats on lakes to benefit game and nongame fish species

LSOHC Southeast Forest Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, and restore habitat for fish, game, and nongame wildlife in rivers, cold-water streams, and associated upland habitat
- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant goat prairies

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds:

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund
- Clean Water Fund

Past acquisitions for WMAs (as part of the Habitat Corridors Partnership) and SNAs have been funded in part by the ENTF. Outcomes of OHC-funded acquisitions support many goals of the Clean Water Fund (protect, enhance and restore water quality in lakes, rivers and streams & to protect groundwater & drinking water).

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:

For WMAs, traditional sources of acquisition dollars are bonding and a surcharge on individual small game licenses. The most recent bonding appropriations for acquisition was in M.L. 2010 (\$1M for fee title, \$3M for Reinvest in Minnesota). These funds are not sufficient to meet the acquisition goals of 439,000 acres acquired between 2002-2052 (Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition – The Next 50 Years). This proposal will account for 19% of the annual acquisition goal of 8,000 acres per year with potential donated value increasing the total acres acquired. For SNAs & NPBs, traditional sources of acquisition dollars are bonding and some ENRTF appropriations. The most recent SNA-NPB bonding appropriation was in 2008. Acquisition of identified priority areas for SNA-NPB typically would require about 5-10 times more funding than all appropriations received. This proposal accelerates protection of key habitat areas through WMA, SNA, and NPB acquisition. This proposal contributes to the implementation of the MN Prairie Conservation Plan.

Sustainability and Maintenance:

The DNR Section of Wildlife manages 1,433 WMA encompassing 1.3 million acres of land in 86 of the state's 87 counties. Lands acquired with Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars will add to this system. Management of WMAs is guided by Management Guidance Documents and is funded primarily through the Game and Fish Fund. For SNAs and NPB, SNA field staff will monitor project sites and take any necessary actions to sustain the habitat improvements as part of their public land management

responsibilities. Ongoing costs for managing SNA and NPB sites after initial site development are primarily those needed for management of invasive species and prescribed burning. Management plans for each site will be developed meeting DNR program standards. Site management and stewardship easement monitoring will be carried out by existing staff, CCM crews, temporary project staffing or through vendor contracting. Periodic enhancements will be funded through annual funding requests from a variety of funding sources, including bonding, gifts, federal sources, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, and Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition? - **No**

County Board of Commissioners' approval for WMA and SNA acquisitions will be sought; native prairie bank easement acquisitions are not required to seek local government approval.

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

Is this land open for hunting and fishing? - **Yes**

No variations from the State of Minnesota Regulations

Will the eased land be open for public use? - **No**

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

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Acquire in fee title 1488 acres of WMA lands	06/30/2016
Acquire in fee title 120 acres of SNA	06/30/2016
Acquire in easement 460 acres of NPB	06/30/2016

Outcomes

Programs in the northern forest region:

- Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation
- Increased availability and improved condition of riparian forests and other habitat corridors

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need
- Wetland and upland complexes will consist of native prairies, restored prairies, quality grasslands, and restored shallow lakes and wetlands
- Water is kept on the land

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need
- Protected habitats will hold wetlands and shallow lakes open to public recreation and hunting

Programs in southeast forest region:

- High priority riparian lands, forestlands, and savannas are protected from parcelization and fragmentation
- Remnant goat prairies are perpetually protected

Programs in prairie region:

- Expiring CRP lands are permanently protected
- Protected, restored, and enhanced habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need
- Protected, restored, and enhanced shallow lakes and wetlands

Budget Spreadsheet

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan

Total Amount of Request: \$4,940,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$65,100	\$0		\$65,100
Contracts	\$14,000	\$0		\$14,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$3,710,000	\$0		\$3,710,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$635,000	\$0		\$635,000
Easement Stewardship	\$42,000	\$0		\$42,000
Travel (in-state)	\$6,000	\$0		\$6,000
Professional Services	\$208,000	\$0		\$208,000
Direct Support Services	\$48,000	\$0		\$48,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$1,000	\$0		\$1,000
Supplies/Materials	\$3,900	\$0		\$3,900
DNR IDP	\$207,000	\$0		\$207,000
Total	\$4,940,000	\$0	-	\$4,940,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Acquisition specialist/coordinator	0.18	3.00	\$37,800	\$0		\$37,800
Field staff (spec./tech/labor)	0.13	3.00	\$27,300	\$0		\$27,300
Total	0.31	6.00	\$65,100	\$0	-	\$65,100

Output Tables

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	120	0	1,488	1,608
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	460	0	0	460
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	580	0	1,488	2,068

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$200,000	\$0	\$3,940,000	\$4,140,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$800,000	\$0	\$0	\$800,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$3,940,000	\$4,940,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	200	115	39	1,185	69	1,608
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	20	440	0	460
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	200	115	59	1,625	69	2,068

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$1,575,000	\$157,000	\$145,000	\$1,945,000	\$318,000	\$4,140,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$65,000	\$735,000	\$0	\$800,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$1,575,000	\$157,000	\$210,000	\$2,680,000	\$318,000	\$4,940,000

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

1 miles

Parcel List

For restoration and enhancement programs ONLY: Managers may add, delete, and substitute projects on this parcel list based upon need, readiness, cost, opportunity, and/or urgency so long as the substitute parcel/project forwards the constitutional objectives of this program in the Project Scope table of this accomplishment plan. The final accomplishment plan report will include the final parcel list.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Anoka

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Carlos Avery WMA	03322225	80	\$280,000	No	Full	Yes

Becker

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Hubbel Pond WMA	13939220	216	\$432,000	No	Full	Yes
Ogema Springs WMA	14242225	80	\$97,000	No	Full	Yes

Big Stone

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Otrej WMA	12245222	120	\$280,000	No	Full	Full

Clay

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Barnseville WMA	13744219	236	\$230,000	No	Full	Full
Felton Prairie SNA addition	14145204	300	\$180,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Gruhl WMA	13945205	320	\$215,000	No	Full	Yes

Dakota

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Mud Creek WMA	11220229	145	\$650,000	No	Full	Yes
Vermillion River WMA	11419221	100	\$500,000	No	Full	Yes

Douglas

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Roy Thompson - East WMA	12840233	61	\$300,000	No	Full	YES

Houston

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Ferndale Butte SNA	10407219	40	\$100,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Root River Prairies NPB	10307203	40	\$80,000	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Kandiyohi

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Burbank WMA	12234226	55	\$165,000	Yes	Full	Full

Lac qui Parle

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Antelope Hills NPB	11746212	180	\$450,000	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Le Sueur

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Earl Swain WMA	10924222	77	\$385,000	No	Full	Yes

Marshall

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Thief Lake WMA	15842228	15	\$9,500	No	Full	Full

Martin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Center Creek WMA	10329221	234	\$950,000	No	Full	Yes

Murray

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Chanarambie Creek NPB	10543202	80	\$208,000	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Norman

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Syre WMA	14344214	117	\$235,000	No	Full	Yes

Olmsted

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Whitewater WMA	10711203	19	\$57,900	No	Full	Yes

Pennington

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Pembina WMA	15345218	950	\$825,000	No	Full	Full

Polk

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Glacial Ridge NPB	14945208	240	\$192,000	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Kertsonville-Snow Creek SNA	14945209	200	\$200,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Pope

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Glacial Lakes NPB	12336231	200	\$360,000	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Stearns

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Crow Wing WMA	13933214	69	\$300,000	No	Full	Yes
Mel Roerhl(New) WMA	12435204	86	\$250,000	No	Full	Yes

Wadena

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Yaeger Lake WMA	13734204	148	\$175,200	No	Full	Yes
Yaeger Lake WMA	13734204	40	\$47,200	No	Full	Yes
Yaeger Lake WMA	13734209	34	\$68,800	No	Full	Yes
Yaeger Lake WMA	13734209	34	\$59,400	No	Full	Yes

Winona

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Whitewater WMA	10609206	37	\$112,000	No	Full	Yes

Wright

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Pelican Lake WMA	12024216	40	\$400,000	No	Full	Yes
Pelican Lake WMA	12024215	24	\$235,300	No	Full	Yes

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

Anoka

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	# Bldgs?	Bldg Improve Desc	Value of Bldg	Disposition of Improvements
Beaverbrook WMA	03323222	14	\$90,000	2	House, garage	\$107,700	Demolish

Wright

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	# Bldgs?	Bldg Improve Desc	Value of Bldg	Disposition of Improvements
Pelican Lake WMA	12024209	100	\$1,000,000	5	House, four outbuildings	\$71,800	Demolish

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.