

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

Date: October 29, 2012

Program or Project Title: DNR Grassland Phase 5

Funds Recommended: \$2,220,000

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

County Locations: Becker, Beltrami, Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Clay, Cottonwood, Douglas, Fillmore, Goodhue, Grant, Houston, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Kittson, Lyon, Martin, Nobles, Norman, Otter Tail, Polk, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Roseau, Sibley, Swift, Winona, and Yellow Medicine.

Ecological Planning Regions:

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

Activity Type:

- Restore
- Enhance

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Prairie

Abstract:

This proposal is part of a cooperative effort to implement the MN Prairie Conservation Plan through accelerating the restoration and enhancement of approximately 18,500 acres of primarily native prairie vegetation on WMAs, AMAs, SNAs and Native Prairie Bank Easements.

Activity Detail

Design and Scope of Work:

The WMA system, started in 1951, has over 60 years of support from conservationists, hunters, and legislators. Over 1.3 million acres of habitat in over 1,400 WMAs are protected by the DNR. Restoration and enhancement of public lands are core elements in a diverse network of habitat complexes which provide permanent population banks from which wildlife and plant communities can expand into the surrounding landscape during optimum environmental conditions. These networks provide migration corridors for movement of both animal and plant communities in response to changing conditions. Strategically located, these complexes provide many tangential benefits including water quality improvements, seed sources and local economic diversity. This strategy will focus on restoring and enhancing prairie habitat on existing public and private lands under permanent easement.

The SNA program, created by the 1969 Minnesota Legislature, currently administers over 140 natural areas and 100 Native Prairie Bank easements. Lands designated as Scientific and Natural Areas have the highest level of protection the state of Minnesota can afford to land. Most restoration and enhancement practices being applied with this proposal have been proven to provide desired outcomes on existing state-managed lands. The assessment portion of this project will also assess these practices for effectiveness and inform future habitat improvement strategies. Through this funding, the state will be able to accelerate improvements on state land thereby providing for improved function of critical wildlife habitat and a more functional prairie landscape. Habitat improvement actions enhance existing degraded habitat to directly increase the productivity of nesting habitat for pheasants, waterfowl and a variety of non-game grassland species such as meadowlarks, longspurs, and other Species of Greatest Conservation Need. These restorations and enhancements will occur on public lands and permanent easements and have already been identified as priorities for accelerated work.

Although Minnesota DNR has the training and know-how to restore high quality prairie vegetation current funding has been insufficient to meet all needs. Many sites on state lands are currently not being actively managed to full potential. Furthermore exotic and/or invasive plants are encroaching into them. Woody cover encroachment is an especially troublesome problem. Re-establishing prairie on public lands requires periodic burning, inter-seeding grasslands with native species, and up to five years post-seeding management. Existing grasslands are impaired by the encroachment of woody vegetation. Newly acquired areas and state-owned marginal croplands also need to be seeded and treated. Using high quality seed from established prairie sites to plant at other locations has proven to be highly cost-effective.

WMA/AMA Habitat Work (8,000 acres over 4 years)

Grassland restoration work will be primarily through seeding either bare ground (e.g

newly acquired agricultural fields) or old-field habitat (e.g. smooth brome). Techniques for this work include site preparation such as mowing, spraying or burning when necessary; and direct seeding. Seed will be obtained via harvesting of local native or restored prairie when possible and purchase of seed from vendors when necessary. Grassland enhancement work uses a number of methods to reinvigorate or increase diversity of existing prairie type grasslands. Techniques that will be employed include brush and tree removal, chemical treatment, mowing, inter-seeding, conservation grazing and burning. DNR will contract much of this work.

WMA Roving Crew (approximately 10,000 acres over 2 years)

Extends the existing Region 4 WMA roving crew for four more years. The crew will be capable of burning approximately 4,000 acres per year (assuming normal weather conditions) and manage an additional 1,000 acres of other wildlife habitat project for a total of 10,000 acres treated over the twoyear life of this proposal. The crew's top priority will be burning. Spring, fall and some summer burning will be conducted. When not burning the crew will work on other habitat projects on WMAs such as woody encroachment removal, creating fire breaks, wetland projects, etc.

Ecological and Water Resources Habitat Work **(approximately 2700 acres over 4 years)**

Restoration of prairie will occur on 30 acres of severely altered lands by reconstructing native plant communities. These restorations are either in-holdings within a native prairie, or lands surrounding a native prairie. Seed will be collected from native prairies adjacent to the restorations or purchased from vendors with local seed sources. These restorations will expand existing prairie habitat and buffer native prairies from the impacts of adjacent land uses. Funding requested for restoration projects will cover all costs and activities associated with reconstructing a prairie including project design, seedbed preparation, seed harvest, seed installation, and first year weed control. Prairie enhancement activities will be implemented on 2670 acres of existing and newly acquired prairies throughout the prairie regions of the state. Funding requested for enhancement projects will cover all project costs and activities including project design, contract administration, staff time, equipment and supplies. These enhancement activities will focus on native prairies, but may include some restored prairies within the project sites. Many of these native prairie sites harbor rare and unique features, or are located on steep terrain, which require low impact management techniques (e.g. hand cutting of woody encroachment). These specialized prairie management techniques, and the skilled crews that implement them, can incur higher costs than similar lower diversity grassland projects.

Restoration and enhancement practices will be designed and administered by DNR staff, while implementation will use a combination of DNR staff and contracted services. There is a backlog of management needs on DNR administered lands and implementation of restoration and enhancement can begin immediately upon receipt of funds. Restoration and enhancement projects would be completed by the end of FY18.

Planning

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds
- H7 Keep water on the landscape

Plans Addressed:

- Grassland Conservation Plan for Prairie Grouse
- Long Range Duck Recovery Plan
- Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN
- Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Plans
- Minnesota DNR Scientific and Natural Area's Long Range Plan
- Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda
- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework
- Partners in Flight Grassland Bird Plan
- Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare
- 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
- Allow public access. This comes into play when all other things about the request are approximately equal
- Restore or enhance habitat on state-owned WMAs, AMAs, SNAs, and state forests
- 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
- Restore or enhance habitat on public 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 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

LSOHC Southeast Forest Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant goat prairies

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds:

- No Relationships Listed

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:

Work contracted on public lands increases capacity for wildlife management activities related to habitat and is supplemental to normal work load. WMA Roving crews act as a self contained "strike team" that can take on additional projects such as burning that are difficult to contract. In addition WMA Roving crews can be combined with DNR Area staff to address projects that require a large number of personnel over a short period of time (e.g. very large burns).

Sustainability and Maintenance:

WMA/AMA

Routine maintenance will be accomplished by Area Wildlife staff as part of their public land management responsibilities within future operating budgets. Periodic enhancements such as invasive species removal, prescribed burning, supplemental vegetation planting or wetland and water level management will be accomplished through annual funding requests from a variety of funding sources including but not limited to Game and Fish Fund, Bonding, Gifts, Federal Sources, Environmental Trust Fund, and Outdoor Heritage Fund.

SNAs/ Prairie Bank Easements

The Division of Ecological and Water Resources and its protection, restoration, and enhancement activities are supported largely by special project funds. The ongoing maintenance of SNA administered lands requires the program to continually seek additional funds to perform its mission. In the future the SNA program will continue to seek Outdoor Heritage Funds as well as other project appropriations to protect, restore, and enhance natural areas.

*Is the activity on permanently protected land and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15? - **Yes (WMA, SNA, AMA, Private Land, State Forests)***

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Habitat work via contracting	6/30/18
Habitat work via WMA Roving Crews	6/30/17
SNA & Prairie Bank Easement work	6/30/18

Outcomes

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:

- No Programs Listed

Programs in southeast forest region:

- Healthier populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species

Programs in prairie region:

- Improved condition of habitat on public lands
- Protected, restored, and enhanced habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need

Budget Spreadsheet

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

Total Amount of Request: \$2,220,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$1,023,700	\$0		\$1,023,700
Contracts	\$758,000	\$0		\$758,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel (in-state)	\$170,800	\$0		\$170,800
Professional Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	\$184,100	\$0		\$184,100
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$33,600	\$0		\$33,600
Supplies/Materials	\$49,800	\$0		\$49,800
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$2,220,000	\$0	-	\$2,220,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
NR spec and tech (WER)	1.00	3.00	\$130,000	\$0		\$130,000
NR laborer (WER)	0.25	2.00	\$22,900	\$0		\$22,900
Wildlife Contract Spec (Wildlife)	1.00	3.00	\$202,500	\$0		\$202,500
WMA Crew Leader	1.00	2.00	\$200,800	\$0		\$200,800
WMA Crew Laborer	5.00	2.00	\$467,500	\$0		\$467,500
Total	8.25	12.00	\$1,023,700	\$0	-	\$1,023,700

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	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	20,992	0	0	20,992
Total	0	20,992	0	0	20,992

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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$2,220,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,220,000
Total	\$0	\$2,220,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,220,000

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	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	975	1,223	18,794	0	20,992
Total	0	975	1,223	18,794	0	20,992

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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$62,000	\$182,300	\$1,975,700	\$0	\$2,220,000
Total	\$0	\$62,000	\$182,300	\$1,975,700	\$0	\$2,220,000

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

0 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

Becker

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Detroit Lakes Area Prairie Restoration	14040224	102	\$53,000	yes

Beltrami

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
2014 Thief River Falls OHF Prairie Enhancement	15538219	50	\$20,000	yes

Big Stone

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
LQP Area Rx Burns	12245209	275	\$16,760	yes
Skoog Grassland Conversion	12447226	7	\$3,500	yes

Blue Earth

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Butternut Prairie SNA	10829230	12	\$4,000	yes

Brown

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Meine PB	10935233	46	\$5,000	yes
Tauer Prairie SNA	10931235	80	\$4,000	yes

Clay

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
B-B Ranch NPB	14146213	540	\$8,000	yes
Blanket Flower Prairie	13744211	120	\$6,000	yes
Felton Assinaboia SNA	14245229	60	\$6,000	yes
Felton Bicentennial Prairie	14145205	30	\$3,000	yes
LSOHC FY14 Woody Removal	13946214	120	\$15,300	yes

Cottonwood

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Mickelson PB	10536227	30	\$3,000	yes

Douglas

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
OHF Red Rock WMA Grove removal	12840220	5	\$12,300	yes

Fillmore

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Beaver Creek WMA, OHF Invasive spray project	10113221	89	\$52,300	yes

Goodhue

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Rochester Area-wide Prescribed burning	11115217	500	\$8,400	yes

Grant

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
LSOHC- DNR Roving Crew Fence Construction	12943223	1,125	\$23,000	yes

Houston

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Jefferson Twp SF	10104220	22	\$50,000	yes
Yucatan Twp SF	10307224	12	\$20,000	yes

Jackson

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Holthe Prairie SNA	10335205	71	\$3,000	yes

Kandiyohi

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Follies WMA Volunteer Tree Removal	12234202	200	\$50,000	yes

Kittson

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Lake Bronson	16146225	5	\$10,000	yes

Lyon

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Custer 15 PB	10941215	60	\$3,000	yes
Lines WMA Scattered Invasive Tree Removal	11340223	229	\$20,000	yes
Lynd 36/Lyons 1 PB	11042201	30	\$3,000	yes
Lyrock WMA Scattered Invasive Tree Removal	11042233	55	\$10,000	yes

Martin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Windom - Contract Tree Removal FY14	10331227	600	\$41,500	yes

Nobles

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Compass Prairie SNA	10141203	19	\$4,000	yes

Norman

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Detroit Lakes Area Buckthorn Removal	14545209	75	\$52,750	yes
Prairie Smoke Dunes	14644218	400	\$8,000	yes
Sandpiper Prairie	14445233	75	\$6,000	yes

Otter Tail

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Erlandson WMA Grassland Enhancement	13143225	90	\$10,000	yes
Prairie Ridge Grassland Conversion	13144216	20	\$3,200	yes

Polk

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Gully Fen	15039225	350	\$8,000	Yes
OHF - Crookston Prairie Brush Mowing	14844219	40	\$10,300	yes
OHF - Crookston Prairie Resto Mowing	14844219	200	\$9,075	yes

Redwood

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Cedar Mountain SNA	11234215	25	\$60,000	yes
Cedar Mountain SNA	11234215	63	\$5,000	yes

Renville

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Morton Outcrops SNA	11334231	15	\$40,000	yes

Rice

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Northfield 25-1	11119225	80	\$4,000	yes

Roseau

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Two Rivers Aspen Parkland	16044220	50	\$30,000	yes
Two Rivers Aspen Parkland	16044220	450	\$8,000	yes

Sibley

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
2014 Nicollet Area Accelerated Prairie Projects	11328217	402	\$101,000	yes

Swift

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Byrne Lake Tree Removal 3	12241206	37	\$5,000	yes
Camp Kerk Tree Removal	12237230	46	\$15,000	yes
Chippewa Prairie Grazing, Utility Fee	12043234	2,866	\$480	yes
LQP Reipple Grazing Infrastructure	12043228	540	\$19,000	yes

Winona

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Prescribed burning WWMA	10609212	1,200	\$40,000	yes

Yellow Medicine

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Fortier 24 PB	11446224	40	\$5,500	yes
Minnesota Falls 3 PB	11539203	35	\$4,000	yes

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type protect.

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.