

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

Date: October 28, 2012

Program or Project Title: Young Forest Conservation

Funds Recommended: \$1,180,000

Manager's Name: George Fenwick

Title: President

Organization: American Bird Conservancy

Street Address: P.O. Box 249

City: The Plains, VA 20198

Telephone: 540-253-5780

E-Mail: gfenwick@abcbirds.org

Organization Web Site: www.abcbirds.org

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

County Locations: Becker, and Mille Lacs.

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Northern Forest
- Forest / Prairie Transition

Activity Type:

- Restore
- Protect in Fee

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Forest

Abstract:

ABC will protect 400 acres and restore an additional 1,100 acres of high quality young forest habitat important for Golden-winged Warblers, Ruffed Grouse and American Woodcock, while leveraging more than \$350,000 in private funding and providing jobs for local contractors.

Activity Detail

Design and Scope of Work:

Minnesota is the key state in an international initiative to prevent Golden-winged Warblers (GWWA), a species that has seen a precipitous population decline, from being listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act or upgraded on the global IUCN list of species in need of immediate conservation action. To accomplish this, high quality young forest habitat (also known as early successional) must be created in GWWA focal areas in ten states using recently developed GWWA Best Management Practices (BMPs). **Minnesota has the highest number of breeding GWWAs in the country** and the second highest population of breeding American Woodcock, another young forest specialist. Successfully meeting GWWA population goals **will require restoring at least 23,000 acres of high quality young forest a year, over the next ten years, in Minnesota**. These habitats will measurably increase habitat for the greatest number of young forest-dependent species listed as Minnesota's conservation priorities because GWWAs have the most specialized habitat requirements; **they will not occupy generic young forest clearings**.

Creating high quality young forest habitat will also help meet goals within **six Minnesota conservation plans** including *Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare*, *Minnesota DNR Non-game Wildlife Plan*, and *Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years*. By creating new areas open to hunting and birdwatching, this work will also support the more than \$97 million the USFWS estimates is spent in Minnesota annually by people who feed or watch birds (USFWS, 2000).

With funding from LSOHC, American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and public/private partners in Minnesota will initiate a long-term project to meet the high quality habitat goals for the GWWA and other species of greatest conservation need by:

(1) **Permanently protecting** (fee acquisition from willing sellers) **400 acres** of high priority forest for GWWA and other species of greatest conservation need.

This property will be acquired and then restored to high quality young forest habitat. It is ideal habitat for increasing GWWA and American Woodcock populations. It will also be open to hunting. Land acquisition negotiations and legal work (appraisals, titling, closing) will be led by ABC's partner, The Conservation Fund, with support from MN DNR, USFWS, and ABC. The Minnesota Coordinator hired under this proposal, and housed at Tamarac NWR, will lead efforts to develop and implement restoration efforts with MN DNR and USFWS using GWWA Best Management Practices created specifically for Minnesota's GWWA habitats.

ABC has targeted Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge as a focus for the first phase of this initiative because it has been documented as excellent habitat containing relatively large GWWA breeding populations. The area in and around Mille Lacs WMA is also excellent early successional habitat and has potential restoration and acquisition sites in and around Mille Lacs WMA. With future funding, the work done with this project will be used to encourage other public and private landowners to create similar high quality young forest habitat within the GWWA focal area. If the current properties under negotiation cannot be acquired within the time period of the grant, we will request permission from LSOHC to change the tract acquired to a property of similar size and habitat value.

(2) Restoring an additional 1,100 acres of high quality Young Forest habitat within scientifically identified areas of Minnesota that provide ideal conditions to significantly increase GWWA, American Woodcock, and other species of greatest conservation need. The Minnesota Coordinator will work with public land managers within high priority GWWA focal areas to identify potential restoration sites, develop site plans, develop RFPs, solicit bids for restoration, oversee restoration activities, monitor success and amend plans accordingly. As part of this work, the Minnesota Coordinator will work with MN biologists and other experts to adapt the GWWA BMPs successfully field tested in Pennsylvania to Minnesota habitats. These new MN BMPs will serve as the basis for GWWA BMPs throughout Great Lakes.

Significantly, with LSOHC funding, ABC can leverage more than \$350,000 in public and private match for this multi-phase Minnesota project. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has committed millions of dollars over ten years to its Keystone Initiative for Golden-winged Warblers and Early Successional Habitat. NFWF funding requires a 3:1 match; LSOHC funding qualifies Minnesota conservation projects for potentially millions of dollars of NFWF funding. Similarly, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has dedicated a portion of its Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act funding to the conservation of GWWAs, and USDA NRCS has also recently redirected some Farm Bill program funding toward GWWAs. LSOHC funding could leverage significant, multi-year funding from these sources as well.

ABC is committed to assisting Minnesota accomplish its habitat conservation goals by bringing expertise and funding this year and in years to come.

ABC is an international non-profit conservation organization dedicated to conserving habitat for native birds of the Americas. ABC was founded in 1986 on the principle that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”; ABC works with more than 300 public and private partners in the U.S. ABC advances bird conservation through direct action and by finding and engaging the people and groups needed to succeed, regardless of their political, economic, or social point of view. ABC seeks innovative, fair solutions to difficult issues. ABC has a long record of successful collaborations of conservation and business interests that ensure that critical birds and habitat receive lasting protection.

Planning

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds
- LU8 Protect large blocks of forest land
- LU10 Support and expand sustainable practices on working forested lands

Plans Addressed:

- Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Plans
- Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years
- National Audubon Society Top 20 Common Birds in Decline
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework
- Partners in Flight Conservation Plans for States and Physiographic Regions
- Ruffed Grouse in Minnesota: A Long-Range Plan for Management
- Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare

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
- Restore or enhance habitat on state-owned WMAs, AMAs, SNAs, and state forests
- 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 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 migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase migratory and breeding success

LSOHC Northern Forest Section Priorities:

- Protect forestland through acquisition or easement to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties
- Restore and enhance habitat on existing protected properties, with preference to habitat for rare, endangered, or threatened species identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey
- Restore forest-based wildlife habitat that has experienced substantial decline

in area in recent decades

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds:

- No Relationships Listed

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:

The effort to save GWWA habitat is an international call to arms with a variety of partners devoting millions of dollars toward the conservation of this threatened species. Now the attention must turn to Minnesota where so much of the breeding habitat for GWWA exists, but must be protected to prevent the listing of this species. This project continues and expands the important work initiated by the Minnesota Young Forest Partnership through a Conservation Partners Legacy grant. This project enhances that initial success that was focused on Ruffed Grouse and American Woodcock habitat by bringing into play the talents and skills of some of the most effective conservation organizations in the country. With the help of ABC and its partners, including the Golden-winged Warbler as a keystone species will greatly accelerate the creation and management of young forest habitat in Minnesota. Simply put, the international effort to protect the Golden-winged Warbler will not succeed without the participation of Minnesota and ABC is eager to assist Minnesotans in this important endeavor.

Sustainability and Maintenance:

A major strength of this project is the demonstrated, long-term commitment of its many partners to creating and maintaining sufficient Young Forest habitat in Minnesota to sustain healthy populations of Golden-winged Warblers, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse and other wildlife **indefinitely**. This first phase will focus on setting the table through the acquisition of critical habitat that is for sale today, employing local contractors to restore the land and using this public land as a model of young forest management, In addition, we will work with Sustainable Forestry Initiative corporate members already pledged to manage their forest lands in a manner compatible with conservation plans to develop forest management plans that incorporate the best science available for young forest dependent species. Support from LSOHC will also enable partners to attract significant national funding sources to Minnesota from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation who have currently made a ten-year commitment to the conservation of Golden-winged Warblers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition? - **Yes**

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

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

ABC and The Conservation Fund will seek to acquire land that will be open to hunting as much as possible and, in all cases where LSOHC funds are used to acquire the land outright.

*Is the activity on permanently protected land and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15? - **Yes (WMA, Private Land, Refuge Lands, Public Waters)***

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Hire staff in Minnesota to work with public land managers to restore Young Forest habitat	July 1, 2013
Purchase 400 acres	October 30, 2013
Restore 1,500 acres of Young Forest habitat	June 30, 2016

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

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced aspen parklands and riparian areas
- Protected, restored, and enhanced nesting and migratory 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: \$1,180,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$100,000	\$30,000	Private Source	\$130,000
Contracts	\$382,500	\$0		\$382,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$600,000	\$0		\$600,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel (in-state)	\$13,500	\$0		\$13,500
Professional Services	\$62,000	\$0		\$62,000
Direct Support Services	\$10,000	\$0	Private Source	\$10,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$5,000	\$0		\$5,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$7,000	\$4,000	Private Source	\$11,000
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$20,000	Private Source	\$20,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$1,180,000	\$54,000	-	\$1,234,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Minnesota Coordinator	1.00	2.00	\$100,000	\$30,000	Private Source	\$130,000
Total	1.00	2.00	\$100,000	\$30,000	-	\$130,000

Budget and Cash Leverage by Partnership

Budget Name	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	ABC	\$100,000	\$30,000	Private Source	\$130,000
Contracts	ABC	\$382,500	\$0		\$382,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	ABC	\$600,000	\$0		\$600,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	ABC	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	ABC	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	ABC	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel (in-state)	ABC	\$10,500	\$0		\$10,500
Professional Services	ABC	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	ABC	\$10,000	\$0	Private Source	\$10,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	ABC	\$5,000	\$0		\$5,000
Capital Equipment	ABC	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	ABC	\$7,000	\$4,000	Private Source	\$11,000
Supplies/Materials	ABC	\$0	\$20,000	Private Source	\$20,000
DNR IDP	ABC	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total		-\$1,115,000	\$54,000		-\$1,169,000

Personnel - ABC

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Minnesota Coordinator	1.00	2.00	\$100,000	\$30,000	Private Source	\$130,000
Total	1.00	2.00	\$100,000	\$30,000		-\$130,000

Budget Name	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	TCF	\$0	\$0		\$0
Contracts	TCF	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	TCF	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	TCF	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	TCF	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	TCF	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel (in-state)	TCF	\$3,000	\$0		\$3,000
Professional Services	TCF	\$62,000	\$0		\$62,000
Direct Support Services	TCF	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	TCF	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	TCF	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	TCF	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	TCF	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	TCF	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	-	\$65,000	\$0	-	\$65,000

Output Tables

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	1,100	0	1,100
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	400	0	400
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	1,500	0	1,500

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$510,000	\$0	\$510,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$670,000	\$0	\$670,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$1,180,000	\$0	\$1,180,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	1,100	0	0	0	1,100
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	400	0	0	0	400
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	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1,500	0	0	0	1,500

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$510,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$510,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$670,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$670,000
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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$1,180,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,180,000

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?
Tamarac #1R	14039214	640	\$163,200	Yes
Tamarac #2R	14039223	640	\$163,200	Yes
Tamarac #3R	14039211	640	\$163,200	Yes
Tamarac #4R	14039226	249	\$63,495	Yes

Mille Lacs

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Four Brooks #1R	04027222	480	\$122,400	Yes
Four Brooks #2R	04027221	440	\$112,200	Yes

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Becker

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Tamarac	14039213	400	\$600,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Mille Lacs

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Four Brooks	04027226	280	\$280,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Four Brooks	04027228	280	\$280,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

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.