



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2014 Final Report

General Information

Date: 11/08/2021

Project Title: DNR Wildlife Management Area and Scientific & Natural Area Acquisition

Funds Recommended: \$8,145,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2014, Ch. 256, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2(a)

Appropriation Language: \$8,145,000 in the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire land in fee for wildlife management area purposes under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8, and to acquire land in fee for scientific and natural area purposes under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 5. Of this amount, \$4,250,000 is for the Vermillion River Wildlife Management Area addition in Dakota County. Money appropriated in this paragraph may not be used to acquire any portion of the Vermillion River Wildlife Management Area Addition that is or will be subject to the removal of gravel or other mining activities. Any funds not spent on the Vermillion River Wildlife Management Area addition must be used for acquisition of land in the seven-county metropolitan area. Lands acquired with this appropriation may not be used for emergency haying and grazing in response to federal or state disaster declarations. Conservation grazing under a management plan that is already being implemented may continue. Subject to the evaluation criteria under Minnesota Rules, part 6136.0900, priority must be given to acquisition of lands that are eligible for the native prairie bank under Minnesota Statutes, section 84.96, or lands adjacent to protected native prairie. A list of proposed land and permanent conservation easement acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

Manager Information

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Location Information

County Location(s): Cottonwood, Dakota, Stearns, Lyon, Murray, Rice, Wright, Norman, Anoka and Chisago.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Prairie
- Metro / Urban

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie
- Habitat

Narrative

Summary of Accomplishments

Work resulting from this appropriation resulted in the acquisition, development, and inclusion of 1,733 acres into the state Wildlife Management Area (WMA) system. We exceeded the projected acres by 56% and exceeded leverage by nearly 20%.

Process & Methods

Through this appropriation the MN DNR protected lands in the prairie, and metro ecological sections. The MN DNR prioritized our acquisitions to focus on parcels with an existing habitat base, acquisition opportunities that provided connectivity and worked toward building habitat complexes, and opportunities that allowed us to maximize habitat benefits. All acquisitions were a result of a relationship with a willing seller. We scored them using a GIS based tool that assigns points based on the natural resource attributes along with other ecological and management criteria. We then ranked them in importance based on their score and input from local DNR land managers. All acquisitions were then subject to County Board review and approval. Ten WMA parcels totaling 1,733 acres are now permanently protected as a result of acquisitions funded by this program. This eclipsed our Accomplishment Plan goal for acquisition by 620 acres!

Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition

Collaborative partnerships are an integral part of our work in strategic land acquisition. Partners that we consult and work with include local townships, watershed districts, and counties. In addition we work closely with acquisition partners such as Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Trust for Public Lands, and the Nature Conservancy to ensure that we are coordinating our acquisition efforts in a way that maximizes conservation outcomes. We work very closely with counties as we seek resolutions of approval from the County Board of Commissioners for all MN DNR led acquisitions.

Exceptional challenges, expectations, failures, opportunities, or unique aspects of program

One of the challenges we had was finding SNA quality parcels. Because the evaluation criteria is so stringent the number of parcels with willing sellers is very limited. This in part contributed to our inability to acquire any SNA's with this appropriation. Fortunately, The supply of WMA quality parcels during this appropriation time period was good and we were able to exceed our AP acre goal by acquiring high quality WMA parcels. That said, an ongoing challenge we have in acquiring land is, the difference between appraised value and a landowners expectations as to what their land is worth. Because of this, we do have a certain percentage of landowners that reject our offer.

What other fund may contribute to this program?

- Other : Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Small Game Surcharge

How were the funds used to advance the program?

We used RIM and Small Game Surcharge funding to supplement landowner payments (FeeAcq w/PILT) and professional services expenditures for some WMA acquisitions made with this appropriation.

What is the plan to sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

All acquisitions funded through this proposal are state lands, and are part of the state outdoor recreation system. Ongoing management will be accomplished through routine work duties by our network of DNR Area staff. Periodic enhancements will be accomplished by DNR staff, MCC crews, temporary project staffing or through vendor contract using traditional habitat funding, bonding, and future requests for funding from dedicated funding sources.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2021 and beyond	Game and Fish Fund; other dedicated funds	Manage habitats to maximize wildlife benefits consistent with management guidance documentation (e.g., burning, mowing/shearing, timber stand improvement, planting, invasive species control).	Maintain boundaries	Monitor and manage public use

Budget

Totals

Item	Requested	AP Amount	Spent	Antic. Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$151,000	\$109,000	\$106,600	-	-	-	\$151,000	\$106,600
Contracts	-	\$130,500	\$116,100	\$65,000	-	-	\$65,000	\$116,100
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$7,600,000	\$7,521,000	\$7,450,900	\$2,250,000	\$2,737,300	RIM, Surcharge, and bonding	\$9,850,000	\$10,188,200
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$200	-	-	-	\$1,000	\$200
Professional Services	\$128,000	\$174,500	\$176,200	\$40,000	\$147,300	Surcharge, Land Sales Acct	\$168,000	\$323,500
Direct Support Services	\$45,000	\$38,000	\$37,900	-	-	-	\$45,000	\$37,900
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	\$1,000	\$171,000	\$164,600	-	-	-	\$1,000	\$164,600
DNR IDP	\$219,000	-	-	\$60,000	-	-	\$279,000	-
Grand Total	\$8,145,000	\$8,145,000	\$8,052,500	\$2,415,000	\$2,884,600	-	\$10,560,000	\$10,937,100

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Field Staff (specs, techs & laborers)	0.17	3.0	\$300	-	-	\$300
FAW Land Acquisition Consultant	0.5	2.0	\$106,300	-	-	\$106,300
Acquisition specialist/coordinator	0.07	3.0	-	-	-	-

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?

The MN DNR uses a standardized DSS calculator that has been developed by our Office of Management and Budget Services.

Explain any budget challenges or successes:

One challenge is accurate budget forecasting in the face of parcel turnover. We submit our initial proposals with proposed acquisition parcel lists in late May. We don't receive funding until a year after we submit the proposal. Often, parcels we planned our proposal and final accomplishment plans around, are no longer available by the time we receive funding. No two parcels are the same. When you have parcel turnover, It makes accurate forecasting and budgeting for land costs, professional services costs and IDP costs very challenging!

Total Revenue: \$0

Revenue Spent: \$0

Revenue Balance: \$0

Of the money disclosed above, what are the appropriate uses of the money:

- E. This is not applicable as there was no revenue generated.

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)	Total Acres (AP)	Total Acres (Final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	750	1,207	0	0	363	526	1,113	1,733
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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	750	1,207	0	0	363	526	1,113	1,733

How many of these Prairie acres are Native Prairie? (Table 1b)

Type	Native Prairie (AP)	Native Prairie (Final)
Restore	-	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	288
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	0
Protect in Easement	-	0
Enhance	-	0
Total	-	288

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)	Total Funding (AP)	Total Funding (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	\$3,895,000	\$3,653,000	-	-	\$4,250,000	\$4,399,500	\$8,145,000	\$8,052,500
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	\$3,895,000	\$3,653,000	-	-	\$4,250,000	\$4,399,500	\$8,145,000	\$8,052,500

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro / Urban (AP)	Metro / Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Forest (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Forest (AP)	N. Forest (Final)	Total (AP)	Total (Final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	363	526	0	0	0	0	750	1,207	0	0	1,113	1,733
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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	363	526	0	0	0	0	750	1,207	0	0	1,113	1,733

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/ Urban (AP)	Metro/ Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Forest (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Forest (AP)	N. Forest (Final)	Total (AP)	Total (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$4,250,000	\$4,399,500	-	-	-	-	\$3,895,000	\$3,653,000	-	-	\$8,145,000	\$8,052,500
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$4,250,000	\$4,399,500	-	-	-	-	\$3,895,000	\$3,653,000	-	-	\$8,145,000	\$8,052,500

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Outcomes

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need ~ Acres of land in the seven county metropolitan area that; protect water quality by

insuring lands remain in an undeveloped state, that protect large blocks of habitat, or add to habitat corridors, that protect unique Minnesota species (e.g. endangered, threatened, and special concern species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need). Species lists (and numbers where available) of those species observed or documented.

- Improved aquatic habitat indicators ~ *Acres of land in the seven county metropolitan area that; protect water quality by insuring lands remain in an undeveloped state, that protect large blocks of habitat, or add to habitat corridors, that protect unique Minnesota species (e.g. endangered, threatened, and special concern species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need). Species lists (and numbers where available) of those species observed or documented.*

Programs in the northern forest region:

- Greater public access for wildlife and outdoors-related recreation ~

Programs in prairie region:

- Expiring CRP lands are permanently protected ~ *Acres of land enrolled in CRP acquired and protected. Acres of native prairie acquired and protected. Acres of grassland/wetland habitat complexes acquired and protected that support upland game birds, migratory waterfowl, big-game, and unique Minnesota species (e.g. endangered, threatened, and special concern species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need). Species lists (and numbers where available) of those species observed or documented.*
- Protected, enhanced and restored remnants of big woods and oak savanna ~ *Acres of land enrolled in CRP acquired and protected. Acres of native prairie acquired and protected. Acres of grassland/wetland habitat complexes acquired and protected that support upland game birds, migratory waterfowl, big-game, and unique Minnesota species (e.g. endangered, threatened, and special concern species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need). Species lists (and numbers where available) of those species observed or documented.*
- Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ *Acres of land enrolled in CRP acquired and protected. Acres of native prairie acquired and protected. Acres of grassland/wetland habitat complexes acquired and protected that support upland game birds, migratory waterfowl, big-game, and unique Minnesota species (e.g. endangered, threatened, and special concern species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need). Species lists (and numbers where available) of those species observed or documented.*
- Remnant native prairies and wetlands are perpetually protected and adequately buffered ~ *Acres of land enrolled in CRP acquired and protected. Acres of native prairie acquired and protected. Acres of grassland/wetland habitat complexes acquired and protected that support upland game birds, migratory waterfowl, big-game, and unique Minnesota species (e.g. endangered, threatened, and special concern species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need). Species lists (and numbers where available) of those species observed or documented.*
- Protected, restored, and enhanced habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species ~ *Acres of land enrolled in CRP acquired and protected. Acres of native prairie acquired and protected. Acres of grassland/wetland habitat complexes acquired and protected that support upland game birds, migratory waterfowl, big-game, and unique Minnesota species (e.g. endangered, threatened, and special concern species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need). Species lists (and numbers where available) of those species observed or documented.*

Programs in southeast forest region:

- Large corridors and complexes of biologically diverse wildlife habitat typical of the unglaciated region are restored and protected ~
- Forestlands and savannas are protected from parcelization and fragmentation and accessible for resource management purposes ~

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

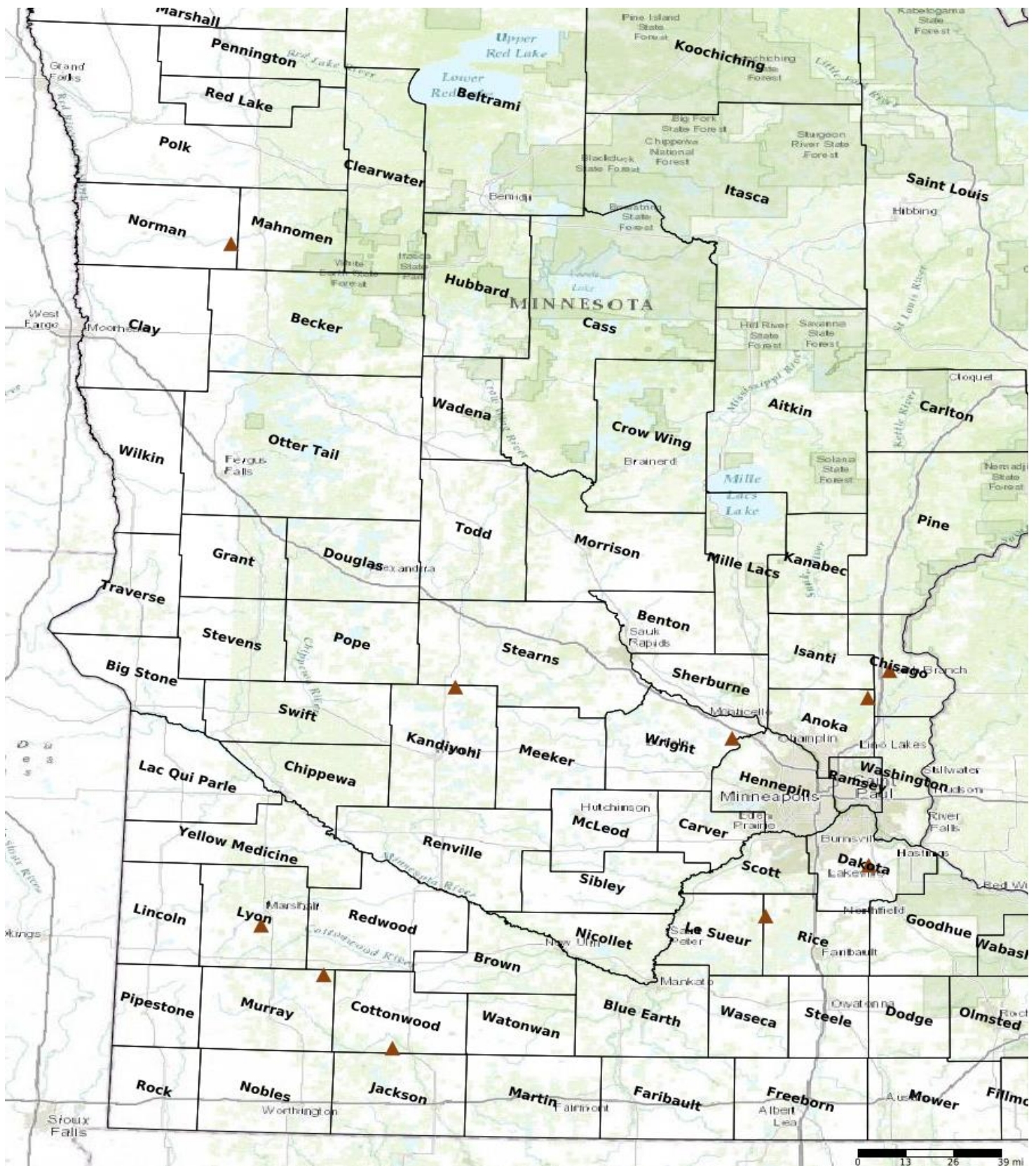
No

Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Carlos Avery WMA 37	Anoka	03322202	40	\$65,000	No
Janet Johnson WMA	Chisago	03521227	110	\$0	No
Buetiful Acres WMA	Lyon	11141232	167	\$630,000	Yes
Plum Creek	Murray	10839210	224	\$1,006,000	No
Follies WMA	Stearns	12234204	110	\$541,000	No
St. Michael Meadows WMA 3	Wright	12024214	12	\$126,000	No

Protect Parcels with Buildings

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Buildings	Value of Buildings
String Lakes WMA	Cottonwood	10536229	300	\$950,000	Yes	2	\$6,300
Vermillion River WMA	Dakota	11419224	364	\$6,500,000	No	10	\$268,100
Faith WMA	Norman	14443226	240	\$350,000	No	5	\$0
Phelps Lake WMA	Rice	11122206	166	\$865,000	No	3	\$128,000



- Protect in Easement
- ▲ Protect in Fee with PILT
- Protect in Fee W/O PILT
- ★ Restore
- ✕ Enhance
- ⊕ Other

Parcel Map
DNR Wildlife Management Area and Scientific & Natural Area Acquisition
 (Data Generated From Parcel List)